THE COMBUSTION CHRONICLES

EPISODE FORTY-SIX
HUMANIZING EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

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GUESTS: LOU CARBONE, CRAIG ALLAN AHRENS, & CHRISTOPH BURKHARDT

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Shawn: Welcome to the fifth season of *The Combustion Chronicles* podcast, where bold leaders combine with big ideas to make life better for all of us. I'm your host, Shawn Nason, CEO and founder of MOFI. In these episodes, we'll be exploring the power, influence, and importance of experience ecosystems. To do that, we're bringing together the most unique and influential experience experts in the world for honest conversations about not being okay with the status quo, leading with heart, and getting real about heartsets and mindsets. In case you're wondering, an experience ecosystem is the web of people, touchpoints, and interactions that combine to create all of the positive and negative experiences we have in the world. When an organization wants to improve customer experience, they're wasting their time if they're not willing to engage and humanize their entire experience ecosystem. It's time to blow up some silos and ignite an experience revolution by putting people first.

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Shawn: On this episode, we're diving into the role that emerging technologies play in creating experiences that keep people coming back. Like it or not, artificial intelligence, robots, and other emerging technologies keep business leaders on their toes as they try to figure out how to navigate a changing world. How can we stay a step ahead of these changes, and more importantly, how can we humanize the technology as it emerges? So to get us started, we have Lou Carbone. Lou is the founder and CEO of Experience Engineering Inc, the organization who pioneered the art and science of experience management as a business discipline. Welcome to *The Combustion Chronicles*, Lou.

Lou: Shawn, thank you so very much. It's indeed an honor to be with you today.

Shawn: Well, it is an honor to have you. You're known for writing some really forward-thinking books and thoughts. One of those includes *Clued In: How to Keep Customers Coming Back Again and Again*. So can you give our listener the *Cliff Notes* on *Clued In,* so they can better understand your framework of clue-based experience design?

Lou: Absolutely. You know, recently there's talk, is customer experience dead? And what we're really talking about is human experience. And our experiences, the molecular structure of our lives is experiences. And the atomic structure of that are the clues and signals that we take in unconsciously and how those affect our emotions, which ultimately, will affect our attitudes and affect our behavior. And so looking at that atomic structure in terms of, what are the unconscious connections that are made by various clues that are embedded in an experience.

Shawn: CX to HX is what I wrote here. That's who we are at MOFI. We are very much about the human experience and how we function. We even have a tagline that says "Our heart-focused, human-first approach." So, everything is an experience, so what changes is how much the experience is managed or not managed. And the reason businesses manage experiences is to really create an emotional bond with people. So in introducing new technology, is there a risk of breaking that emotional bond? And is it really worth it?

Lou: I think there's an opportunity in the humanity that is embedded in that. In understanding that technology is not an experience but a tool, that we're living in an era where we have to be able to sense and respond. But we do need to look at the world. The way that the world was in the Industrial Age was very much like a school bus, where we made specific stops, had a schedule, not very adaptive at all. And the world that we live in today, is much more about sensing and responding. And that's like being an Uber. We don't even know where someone is going until they tell us where they're going. This whole effort of the idea of managing by wire. But we do need to understand that there are jet aircrafts that can't fly without computer or technology assistance. That it's too complex for humans. So I do believe what is so critical is really understanding the dynamics that technology represents tools. And unfortunately, most of the tools are built around break-fix, and look at the exhaust from experiences versus the fuel that you put into the engine.

Shawn: How do you make this mesh or this brilliance between high touch, so that human experience and high tech? Can that really be done in experiences today?

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Lou: I think the biggest problem at the moment is the technologies that we see are not as sophisticated as they need to be to begin to get to unconscious frameworks. That we make decisions unconsciously, and it's based on frameworks that exist in our primitive brain.

And what's happened is that we become so enamored with individualization, which is important, but what we're losing sight of is the basic human needs, the base platform, unconsciously, that we view the world through those frameworks. And the way that I look at experiences is there are three levels of experience design. The first is basic human needs, second is cultural, and the third is individualization. And many organizations are using technology to get to individualization, but missing basic human needs that reside in our unconscious that really drive our decision making. We make decisions emotionally and then create intellectual alibis for those decisions.

Shawn: As you were talking about that, Lou, like the aha, the lightbulb that went off in my head is I actually think that we're trying to start with individualization and experiences before really understanding the need.

Lou: Precisely. Segmentation is almost the band of true connection. I even believe that segmentation is what's created the division in this country in terms of being able to message people, and this obsession with individualization and segmentation versus what are basic human needs. What we've created is fragmentation. And the other thing that we face is homogeneity of experience because everyone is doing the same thing. Everyone is looking at break-fix versus how do I begin to create distinctive economic value experientially?

Shawn: Wow. Segmentation creates fragmentation. That's powerful. We just recently were working on a request for a proposal for a major healthcare system, and that was one of their requests. And again, another lightbulb moment here, people, is that the chief marketing officer

was wanting segmentation. And that's not what needs to happen. So, you know, you say that being people-centric isn't enough and that, instead, we need to be people-driven. So what's the difference between people-centric and people-driven?

Lou: Exactly. It's walking through the maze of the customer's mind versus the voice of the customer. It's understanding how customers think versus what they think. And we're so hung up on what customers think that we don't understand how they think about experiences.

When you look at the definition of experience, it's basically is, in its simplest form, an impression. And an impression takes place in our mental mind. And I think that what we spend too much time doing is looking at opinion versus what is it that really is happening in the maze of the mind of the customer, the maze of the mind of the employee, the maze of the mind of the patient, and understanding how they think about things versus what they think. And that's the distinction between being driven by customers. And, you know, like, we had coined an expression many, many years ago, which was, "Customer back versus company out." And then later, I think, someone published something that was "Inside out, outside in." But the critical key is getting into the mind of the customer and not just the opinions that customers express. So understanding how they think versus what they think becomes critical.

Shawn: So then, I have to ask you then, so what's the secret sauce for helping more companies become more people-driven?

Lou: Well, I think the biggest, critical thing... And recently, I just had a conversation the other day with Gerald Zaltman, who's a professor emeritus at the Harvard Business School that I've done work with over the years. And Gerry is working on open-mindedness. And we had a conversation. And what doesn't exist in business today is open-mindedness. That we're very comfortable doing what we've always done and slapping another name on it and thinking that we're doing customer experience, whereas we're doing surveys that we've done forever and ever. Doing different things that we've always done.

And I think that the difficulty is the balance between courage and comfort. And I really would like to probe, and we're starting to probe organizations that have the courage to actually adopt a new system, a new ecosystem that... And in fact, I'd rather almost call it a system. An ecosystem sounds a little too ecological at times. And in its simplest form, it's just a simple system, how pieces connect to create this ultimate experience. So, when you do look at Disney, I mean, it's the clue math. It's all of the little signals and clues that are embedded in that experience. That was life-changing for me, working with that organization, as it was for you, Shawn, to really understand the magic that's there. And at times, I don't even believe Disney really understands the next practice that was there, which was literally a cartoonist who understands clues, and in four frames, had to embed clues to make a connection, and just expanded that to movies, and then expanded that to real-life situations.

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Shawn: Yeah. So, if a company is this great, big, giant ecosystem, or a system of experiences, how do we...how do you convince more senior leaders and leaders to invest in an experience strategy that will reach every branch of that system?

Lou: Yes, it's an area that I refer to as fusionomics. And that we need to let go of this construct of all of this Industrial Age legacy systems that exist and thinking, need to be broken down that what we need is emotional alignment across all of the pieces. And that's that base platform I was talking about, which is basic human needs, and that emotional connection that takes place on that level unconsciously. What I think becomes so critical, Shawn, as we look at trying to align all of these pieces, is we utilize a thing called an experience motif, that is literally an emotional inframe. So there's alignment on a North Star, and that we delve at getting at unconscious thought to create that North Star and aligning all of the pieces. I watch a lot of journey mapping, and it's very linear. And experiences today are more like a pinball machine, if anyone remembers what pinball machines were like. You never know where they're going to hit, but there's a general feeling that I want to win, and that there's a goal, and that you're focused on that. And no matter where you hit, you're contributing to achieving that goal. And I think that one of the difficulties is that we're into process management rather than experience management, in many cases, when journey mapping.

Shawn: I'm very excited about your experience motif. And we call it the experience promise. You have to have that North Star. I worked in the corporate world for a long time, went out on my own, you know, started our company, MOFI. People don't understand, once you create a five-year strategy, it's already old. But if you can create this experience ecosystem, or a system, and then a promise and align to that, that's a lifetime. And that's what Disney does brilliantly.

Lou: Exactly.

Shawn: That's what so many companies do. Give me a North Star, and I will go after it, and I will get behind it, or as we used to say at Disney, "You can go make magic someplace else."

Lou: Exactly, many, many years ago, when progressive auto insurance went direct to the consumer, I was involved in that work. And, you know, if you did traditional journey mapping, you would think that a claim started at the moment that you called to file a claim. But we brought them online. And it was the first insurance company to sell direct online, and became the fastest growing and most profitable. But what was so critical was understanding the emotional mindset. And when we created the instant response vehicles that showed up at the scene of the accident, that was the point of greatest vulnerability for a customer.

Shawn: Wow. I'm letting that sink in, man. It's good stuff. We've come to the combustion questions, which are two random questions. I've not got them until just now. You've not heard them. But have fun with them. Answer whatever comes to your mind first. And we'll dive into those. So are you ready for your first combustion question, Lou?

Lou: Absolutely.

Shawn: So, question number one. Would you rather live in a cave or a treehouse?

Lou: In a treehouse.

Shawn: And why?

Lou: I think that you need to have a broad purview. And I think that so many organizations in life can be very myopic, and in a cave, there could be nothing more myopic. Whereas in a treehouse, you really understand what I would call the landscape of experience management in life and see the interconnections of various pieces. To me, that's been the most rewarding part of trying to keep an overview, and look at things from on high, and understand how the pieces fit, versus being hidden in a dark cave.

Shawn: Love it. Love it. All right, combustion question number two, Lou, is, what's your hidden talent?

Lou: My hidden talent is integration of thought. I don't really think of myself as being talented, but I think that what I see is somewhat different than what other people see when looking at things.

Shawn: Well, Lou, again, thank you. Thank you for these amazing nuggets in the short amount of time that you've given us. And we look forward to having you back on [00:20:00] *The Combustion Chronicles* again. So until then, stay safe and be well, Lou.

Lou: Thank you. Be well, my friend. Bye-bye.

[00:15:30]

Shawn: Let's shift now to focus on technology and experience design in an industry that's in huge need of humanization, the healthcare industry. And it's pretty sad to have to own that truth, that you'd think that an industry that's responsible for keeping people alive would have already figured out how to be human-centric, but it's not. So to bring us there, we have Craig Allan Ahrens. Craig is the Senior Vice President of Growth and Strategy of CareRev [00:00:30] in Los Angeles, California. He's a professional healthcare leader and innovation executive with over 20 years of experience. Welcome to, *The Combustion Chronicles*, Craig.

Craig: Thank you. I appreciate it.

Shawn: It's great to have you on here. And like all entrepreneurs Craig wears many hats, so let's dig into a few of them. Can you tell us a little bit about your latest venture, CareRev, where did the idea come from, and how's it going?

Craig: Sure. You know, it's actually an idea that came forth by two founders, and those founders Will Patterson, and Sophia his partner developed this idea... Oh, geez, that over five years ago, and Will, is actually one of those non-traditional founders, former surfer, former ICU nurse, former, you know, name the adventure sport or thing. And he really came to this idea after working in ICU trauma as a nurse, and seeing how hard it was to just pick up a shift, whether it's

going through traditional staffing agencies or, you know, going through a hospital, employment services, how non-human interaction oriented, being non-engaging, non, you know, going through all the different hurdles, right? I mean, sometimes it takes 12 weeks to get into a hospital, or even get into your local staffing agency. Right? So in a system that depends upon people to provide care, why should it be so hard for people who want to pick up shifts, and want to do work to help patients, why are we making it so difficult for them to, A, have the ability to have awareness and transparency around what it takes to get into there, meaning the credentials and everything else, but also, B, visibility around the shifts, the types of shifts, the requirements, how much you're willing to pay for those shifts, and, C, you know, engaging those professionals, whether it's a CNA, a medical assistant or a nurse in a way that is appealing and gets them to pick up a shift and then rate how that experience has been, and also, you know, see, "Well, I really like this healthcare system, maybe I want to work for them and be able to be recruited."

So it's fundamentally a different approach, versus a traditional staffing agency, or travel company like Nomad, where we don't want you to always depend upon external labor. We want to be part of the solution in terms of a new labor model around creating work marketplaces, and enabling you, when you need to, tap into a local curated pool of people, in a way that's appealing to them, and cuts out all the middlemen.

Shawn: So let's talk a little bit then... And congratulations. I mean, this is a disruptive way of using a technology. Our listeners have heard me say it several times, high touch, high tech. You're making an incredible blend in that. So as the future of work comes clearly through your work here at CareRev, you see the future of work is highly flexible, independent, and modular for all of these clinical positions. So what new stories will people tell themselves to make sense of this world because you're really disrupting the whole staffing model in healthcare, and particularly in hospitals. And for instance, how are the people that use CareRev adjusting their personal narratives about work and telling that story?

Craig: Right. So, you know, first of all, most professionals like flexibility and they like the ability to have agency or control over what they're doing, right? Whether or not they're a full-time or part-time or whatever model of employment that you have. And what healthcare has lost, in my opinion, being a former operator is we've lost sight of the fact that these professionals are people that get burnt-out. They want more opportunity. They want to feel like they're part of something grander and having more agency and more control and more ability to get more experience. And what our platform enables them to have a narrative around is I'm able to choose the shift that I want, at the price I want, when I want, and I'm able to get some experience that maybe I would not have been exposed to before, and that helps me grow as a professional and enables me to become something more. We're not advocating getting rid of full-time employment, okay? That's not what we're advocating. What we're advocating is the reality that not everyone wants to work full-time, that people want to have the ability to work in whatever fashion they want to work. And if they have a full-time job, maybe they want to pick up some extra shifts to pay off some debts, to earn some extra money for retirement, whatever it is, they have that ability to do it, and we're enabling that by removing the barriers.

Shawn: You're shifting the power, back to the human, to the person instead of being dictated by the system is what I'm hearing.

Craig: The power dynamic of supply and demand, I mean, like it or not, the employees have the power just simply because they are the professionals, and there's limited supply of them, and demand is going to continue to surge because the normal population dynamics that we're seeing, and even with COVID, it's exacerbated it, right?

Shawn: Yeah.

Craig: And we can talk about this ad nauseam, but, you know, why was it? One in five workers are considering quitting because of burnout? And, you know, it didn't help that a lot of folks were laid off during COVID, you know, after working so hard during their career. So these scenarios where, they've worked within these environments, and they may not have been treated as well as some of their other colleagues or other systems that have been treated. This offers them options to shop and to be able to get the experience that they want and deserve in a meaningful way. And on the health system side, it works for them because now I'm accessing people that they never would have been able to access before. And I just love when I hear some healthcare leaders say, "Well, I'm going to recruit 100 nurses this next year." From where? More power to you if you're able to do it. And maybe you are, but, you know, I've never heard of a viable healthcare model where it's 100% full-time employment. You need some flexibility and you need some ability to handle surges in demand, and what have you. And what we offer is that flex-capacity of tapping into a pool of people that really want to work in that manner with you.

Shawn: Yeah. I love that. So thanks for sharing that insight. And I think it's truly powerful. And we talk a lot about, you know, building these experience promises within organizations around experience ecosystems, giving people that purpose and that North Star. And that's what I'm hearing you say. I want to jump into a little bit of a heart issue here, and knowing that not every experience is pleasant by any means. We were sorry to see on your LinkedIn post, in which you shared the news of the passing of your father from COVID-19, Craig, and you chose to make that story public to shine a light on, as you said, the hard truth about how much more we need to grow as a nation. So first off, I want to thank you for telling your story and sharing your heart there. Can you share why you think we need to hear more stories like that today than ever before?

Craig: Well, it's hard for me to talk about this obviously, so just give me a moment here. I think we need to hear more stories about this and face the reality that many healthcare organizations have been understaffed during COVID and are chronically understaffed now, right? And my father you know, I can't help, but think that if someone was there, and more closely monitoring his pulse-ox, then maybe he might have been... You know, he'd be here today. And there's a million other stories beyond just me of people who've experienced this. And it's not just COVID. It's... name your disease at a healthcare institution. Right? And it comes

down to people, and access to resources, and that focus of one-on-one patient care. And there's many healthcare systems that recognize this. And that's why they're leveraging our platform in order to engage people in the way that they want to work and in a way that is meaningful to them and it makes them more satisfied and happier so that those people are energized and they're fully engaged, and they're able to serve the patients better.

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Shawn: My heart goes out to you, so thank you for sharing your story. And for people that don't work in the industry, I do think COVID did bring it to the forefront of what we're facing in healthcare around burnout and shortage. It's actually a crisis. And the one thing we can't do in healthcare is we can't take the human out of it. And as an industry, we tried so long to use technology to be the answer, but we still have humans in this, and COVID brought to light how much we need that. So again, thank you for sharing your story.

Craig: I appreciate that, and appreciate the opportunity to share that. You know, there is one other thing, Shawn, that I don't think I really hit upon. I talked a lot about how the employees need a better way or the professionals need a better way of engaging, but there's a lot of healthcare systems out there that are leveraging this platform that have approached us that recognize that they need to do this and are really pushing the envelope in terms of figuring out ways to attract and engage new people. It's not just on the professional side. So we enable that connection of the systems that are wanting to change, and they recognize that they need to change how they engage professionals, and how they build their labor workforce models with the people who want to work in a 21st century way. So I appreciate being able to tell that story.

Shawn: Well, again, thank you, both your professional and personal story. But we've come to that time, Craig, where we have this section called, the Combustion Questions. And they are two randomly selected questions I'm going to ask you and just ask you to have a bit of fun with them, to allow our listeners to get to know you. So, Craig, are you ready for your Combustion Questions?

Craig: I'm always ready for a unique question. Go ahead.

Shawn: Awesome. So Combustion Question number one Craig is, phone call or text message?

Craig: It depends on the situation, right? If it's something that requires more than three texts back and forth, I prefer a phone call. If it's just a short, less than three, yeah, text message works just fine.

Shawn: Awesome. Combustion Question number two. What do think about thunderstorms?

Craig: I think they're beautiful and they... I mean, I know the science behind it too, so, you know, lightning helps create nitrogen, which helps create, you know, nourish plants and everything else, but they're beautiful. It's wonderful.

Shawn: Well, yeah, they are. And I think I'm getting ready to sit and experience one here this afternoon. So again, Craig, thank you so much for being with us and joining us here on, *The Combustion Chronicles*. And I hope we can have more conversations in the future and have you back. So thank you again, Craig.

Craig: All right. Thank you, Shawn.

[00:27:55]

Shawn: To round out this episode, let's shift now to focus on artificial intelligence with a badass expert in this space. Let's welcome to *The Combustion Chronicles*, Christoph Burkhardt. Christoph is the CEO of OneLife and founder of TinyBox Academy, an entrepreneur, author, award-winning speaker, and facilitator. He has helped companies like Intel, Merck, and BMW create cultures of innovation. Welcome to "The Combustion Chronicles," Christoph.

Christoph: Thanks so much for having me. Thank you.

Shawn: Yeah. So, Christoph, you have this dynamic background, and really an amazing optimistic message that I so appreciate. One of the main messages you preach is easy for people to remember, don't be a robot. I love that. Can you tell our listeners what that means, who's it for, and why you even had to develop that?

Christoph: Yeah, I mean, that's something I can't get rid of. I see it everywhere. So not being a robot pretty much means, in a nutshell, that if you act and you work and you think like a robot, then you will probably be replaced by one. Because we've been seeing this for the last five years, at least, that the people or the jobs that get replaced mostly by AI and other tools are very standardized routine jobs, and that's what I call being a robot. If you do too much robotic work, then you're in danger and you need to find something else. But I'm very optimistic that we all, we find these jobs, we find things to do, we just have to relearn being more human. That's basically the opposite of being a robot. You have to relearn to be human with all the creativity and the application of new technologies. That's really where this comes to. We need to find the cases and then robots can do the work. But yeah, we need to get used to being more human again. That's the idea.

Shawn: I love that. We talk about a ton within our organization, MOFI, that we must have a heart-focused, human-first approach. Being known as the AI expert as you are, you still are talking about, "We still got to be human." So you help major companies globally for this massive AI-driven paradigm shift. How do companies integrate AI to drive experiences across their experience ecosystems in your opinion?

Christoph: Yeah, it's fascinating. So there are some companies that do amazing jobs by understanding that this is a feature, AI is a feature, it's a tool that you can use to make your vision actually come to life. Some companies are really good at using AI to predict, and this is mainly what it does as of today, and the prediction becomes a recommendation. So you see that everywhere from companies like Netflix, or Amazon using that to do products or movie recommendations. But we also see it in health, and this is something I'm really interested in.

This is, can you make recommendations based on data that you have about the environment, the experience ecosystem that people actually live in? So for us at OneLife is mostly their homes, their offices, whenever they're indoors. These are experience ecosystems and the products that we bring, they are all part of these ecosystems. And whatever recommendation we can make to make people healthier is something that is a use case that's valuable. And that's where I wanna see AI go. It's really to protect people.

Shawn: Yeah. So why is using emerging technologies so strategy-dependent then, and what drives that?

Christoph: So what I think with emerging technologies, and this goes back to when you see the rise of the internet, I think we see a similar phenomenon now where people overestimate in the beginning what the technology can do, like they did with the internet, and then they get disappointed, and then they lose trust and then over time, they underestimate what the technology really does, how transformative it is. And so now we see AI being overestimated, so people will talk to chatbots and they're disappointed that they're not great. Underestimating long term though that we're training AI everywhere right now, and that the same algorithms will be super useful in the future. And what it really takes is people understanding that strategies drive this technological shift more than the technology itself. So pretty much the difference between companies asking, "How can we use and apply AI right now?" That's not a good question. The real question is, what can we do to make human lives better? And then, what's a good application in that space for AI? So the strategy really drives the use case, and then the use case asks for certain technologies to be deployed, and there certainly is space for AI everywhere. It's just like the internet was transformative to pretty much every industry. But, yeah, it's super interesting. I think AI to call it artificial is kind of misleading. I think it should be called augmented intelligence. And so the strategy really is just an augmentation. It's guiding where AI is gonna go next. But it has to be strategy first, or else we will end up with use cases that are not very useful. I mean, there's a lot of nonsense on the internet too and we kinda can't afford that with AI really.

Shawn: Yeah. I wanna talk a little bit about trends. One of our partners, within MOFI, Michael, talks about a ton of solving for the right problem. And I love how you were just talking about, you know, not how do we use AI in our strategy, but what can we do to make life better is really the problem you're trying to solve, and is AI one of those components. So I love that and I love that you talk about these use cases. And we do a lot of work with future forecasting. And, again, you said, a good strategy is not a plan and it's not a tactic, it's a powerful set of scenarios about the future. Can you explain how you are using scenarios to define future states, both within TinyBox and OneLife?

Christoph: Yeah, this is... I mean, I love this game and I love playing that every day, going through different scenarios about the future. I feel as if this is my job as CEO, is to find the right response to what's ever-changing in the world. And we have to be adaptive because we're constantly in a technological evolution in which things shift all the time. We kinda live in an age of constant change, and it's only accelerating so it will require more adaptive behavior, more

responsive and a proactive behavior. That means we need more scenarios rather than more plans because a five-year plan today will not hold if you're in the technology space.

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Shawn: I love that. And, you know, we talk a lot about heart in business and about having this global mindset. So TinyBox has a diverse global team to address diverse global challenges and helps clients connect humans and machines using the most relevant business cases, just like you've talked about. So why is it necessary to have a diverse team if you're wanting to connect humans and machines?

Christoph: Oh, yeah. Diversity is so crucial and it's the diversity of thought and approaches to problem solving. We totally overestimate how much we understand each other in general. How much we understand our target group, how much we understand the customer. We need to know them in detail and this is... I know people talk about human-centered design and customer focus, but I see it with so many companies that there's a lot of talk and then there's not really understanding the customer or the user in the end. I think for OneLife, this was an interesting choice by the board to get me as a cognitive psychologist to run a total engineering company. And my focus is really to, we have to go deep into understanding what people who think different from ourselves think, and to get there, diversity is the key. And it's global diversity because location and timing is crucial. So people are in different spots in the world, in different spaces, different mind spaces in different times. You know, we live parallel worlds. I live in Silicon Valley here, even when I go back to see the R&D team in Germany, I feel this is time traveling, that's like three or four years back. You see things on the street here that you will see five years later in the rest of the world and then I don't know, 15 years later you will find that it's not implemented in other spaces. So people live in completely different times, they live in different spaces, they live in different experiences, and all this drives what they need and what they expect from the product of the future. And so we need to understand them in detail and accept that we don't know them, we hardly know anything about their lives, we need to observe, we need to understand and really dig deep to go there. And always start with the assumption that we do not know much, that this is a constant learning process. I mean, at OneLife we were super surprised to see that the air purifier is mostly bought by 25 to 35-year olds who have never had an air purifier before. That's a shocking experience when you learn that, oh, it's not families, it's not old people with asthma. No, this is awesome to see that, oh, this is a completely different thing from what we expected. So we did not know and so yeah, now we have to understand them.

Shawn: And I love what you said there too about human-centered design, you know, it's so much more. And I did a podcast with a gentleman, Nate Brown, who said that psychology is actually the base of CX or in the base of experience. So I know you would appreciate that. And I think we need to really, as an industry, look at that, especially around this concept of technology and AI. And so appreciate your nuggets that you have given us. This is coming close to this, you know, three-part segment on using emerging technologies to create experiences. But before we finish, Christoph, we do this thing called the Combustion Questions, which are

some random questions that we ask our guests to have some fun with. So are you ready for your combustion questions, Christoph?

Christoph: I don't know but let's try.

Shawn: All right. So combustion question number 1. You can choose anyone in the world to become friends with, who would you choose?

Christoph: Oh, wow. I mean, if I can, this is completely open, but I would say I would love to hang out with Steve Jobs for a while. Indirectly, I've learned a lot from him. But I would love to hear his approach to what's happening now. He was in a different time... That's, I mean, fascinating how he brought this, especially the human-centered design, the simplicity, to business, and I think this is still so relevant and it becomes more and more relevant even.

Shawn: I love that and yeah, I wish I could have met him and had a conversation with him myself. All right, so combustion question number 2, Christoph. What do you think about giraffes?

Christoph: Oh, giraffes are... Oh, they're so interesting. I mean, they're the perfect example of how evolution can be seemingly random in its approach to adapting, yeah, I don't know, social organisms to their environment. And we think there's a lot of strategy behind what we do and we have this big plan as a human race and we totally forget that we also just part of evolution, and that most of the things we do are just random mutations and adaptations to our environment. And the giraffe is the perfect example. I mean, look how dysfunctional that body seems and then it's functional in its own way and it has its spots. So whatever we look at, every product, every human being, every human behavior, human behavior can be so odd and it can look so strange what we do, and we seem so irrational, but everything we do has been adaptive to our environment at some point. So whenever we make fun of animals, we should look at ourselves and look really closely to how ridiculous of an animal we are. I loved giraffes for that.

Shawn: I love that. Christoph, thank you for giving us just a little bit of your knowledge around technology and AI. And thank you for concluding, you know, these three segments around emerging technologies that create experiences. And I look forward to seeing what happens not only with OneLife, but also with TinyBox, and hope we can collaborate in the future.

Christoph: Yeah, I would love that. Thanks so much for having me.

Shawn: Awesome.

Shawn: Thank you so much for listening to this episode of *The Combustion Chronicles*.

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