

# PK 109 Raleigh Panel 1

Wed, 7/8 10:02PM 14:34

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, triangle, wilmington, big, tech, talent, companies, lawyer, talk, duke, large corporation, unc, organization, corporate venture, startup, bit, network, code, grow, pay

## SPEAKERS

Matt Hunckler



Matt Hunckler 00:13

I'm really excited to talk a little bit about what some of the biggest challenges have been in the past, but then also how are some of the ways that the triangle is overcoming those? So I'd like to start with first with the early stage of things. Brian, if you could talk a little bit about what was it, like starting up your company, and what were some of the resources you tapped into, personally, as you're watching right here in the triangle?



00:39

Yeah. Right. I would say, anyone in here who's started a company knows it's really hard. You know? Right, like, all these things that I didn't know about, you know, having to find a lawyer to do X, Y, and Z. I thought, you know, you just send in something to the state and hey, I'm a business that was wrong. I think the first thing that I did was I tried to to do what Chris was talking about a minute ago and get involved in integrator network. Something that I love about the area is that I've never been turned down for a mentorship meeting. Like if I'm selling something I've been turned down plenty, but, you know, like people like to have my personal mentor, Scott Wingo or Eric Trojan. Both of them were willing to meet with me without knowing anything about me or what I'm doing. And I think that that's representative of the entire community here. I also tapped into my peer networks at Duke and UNC. I prefer Duke but you know,



01:50

favorites here.



01:51

Yeah, I like to say that I got my MBA at UNC because they are the only school dumb enough to take me



01:58

but I'm just kidding. My mom Went to UNC.



02:02

But, you know, I found my lawyer again talking about lawyers through a Duke connection. And so, you know, really reaching out and asking people just for help not for not for sales, not for anything like that. Just



**Matt Hunckler** 02:16

Daisy, you broke into tech through non traditional education. Can you talk to me a little bit about code the dream and what that experience was like for you writing that



02:25

first line of code?



02:27

Yeah. So before I went to code dream, I was a stay at home mom. So I like to say I was a professional peanut butter and jelly maker. And I had the idea one day that I wanted to break into tech because I read an article that said, people in tech are exceptionally nice and welcoming a fancy degree from the University in order to get into this field. And so I said, Well, I'm going to get into this field. And it's been a fantastic experience, all detected by me in our super generous, super outgoing, super helpful I'm sad to hear that that's emblematic of the triangle because I feel like that's really what's gonna move this entire industry forward is that when people are really giving forward and really giving up their

time and talent, but going back to code, the training, so I started writing code there. It's a free program. And then after that, I went to accelerated boot camp. And after that, I worked at Duke University go Duke for a couple years as a front end engineer, so that entire path is nine months to sit at home with my kids to being a professional software engineer. Now I'm back at code the dream as the director of programs that were making that path clear for other people in the program, other people in the triangle from underrepresented groups, particularly immigrants, and refugees are really looking for a foothold into this tech career. And we rely so heavily on our team of volunteers and we often get more volunteers and we actually know what to do with and I think that's just So, really so indicative, this culture that Chris was talking about the folks triangle are just so helpful. And we're really, really glad to be a part of this community. We couldn't do the work that we do without the community.



Matt Hunckler 04:16

Can you tell us a little bit about the scale? You mentioned earlier, you got a cohort that not just here in the triangle but reaches across the country, right. So



04:24

we have 20 intense in our program right now. And these are paid interns. I have finished our classes. And so now they're building apps for local nonprofits. On top of that, we have a class starting on Monday, 45 people across the country that will be part of our first national cohort.



Matt Hunckler 04:51

Robert, I was talking to you earlier about just the amazing things happening in Wilmington, talk a little bit about what's happening out just outside the triangle in Wilmington. Sounds like things are booming in tech right now.



05:03

Yeah, so, uh, first hats off because being a parent is the hardest job I've ever had. I have a saying that one day is a new Friday, because my real job sorry. But um, you know, I've been in Wilmington now for 15 years, and it has changed drastically. I heard the mayor speak the other night, he said that there's projections and state projects, about 3 million people to be moving into North Carolina over the next 20 years. 10% of those people are

moving to Wilmington, that would double our population over a 20 year period. So I think with population comes everything, the opportunities with people a big, big believer in human capital, and it's that population that's going to present opportunity for us. But you know, women's is no longer the vacation beach, sleepy beach town that you know, I think most people are familiar with Wilmington from this part of state you go there weekend and then you go back to work right? We have lots of



06:05

case study now success



06:06

stories. We have Encino Live Oak bag. You know, untapped gigs out. I mean, there's a lot of tech taking place in Wilmington, in large part due to people coming there and deciding that they want to stay. We have capital via Angel networks venture South is now in Wilmington. I'm at Cape Fear was in one weekend. We don't have a I don't know how much I can reveal about this. But there is a very large \$500 million venture capital fund being started for FinTech investing. So right here first, yeah, a lot going on in Wilmington these days. That's awesome.



Matt Hunckler 06:49

I know you've you've grown considerably. Can you talk a little bit about your own scaling in that area?



06:55

Yeah, so



06:57

Wilmington has been a really good place to build a business. And I think in large part because of how easy it is to connect with people.



07:07

I, my network



07:08

of friends and colleagues and women are bigger than my national



07:13

network. And I've lived in six different cities



07:14

on the east coast.



07:18

You know, it's it's been, it's just been a very easy place to grow a business. Now, that doesn't mean growing businesses easy. But but it has been a very easy place, a supportive place to grow a business.



Matt Hunckler 07:31

One of the things that you mentioned just around the talent side of things, this region is drawing all of this talent and a big piece of that is these bigger tech companies. And you've got a lot of HQ twos and HQ threes here that are growing with a lot of acquisitions, you know, Red Hat, Genesis, that's, that's here, and we'll bring up on stage here in a minute, drawing tons of amazing talent into the region. Chris, you and I were talking previously about some of the opportunities that you're seeing when you kind of look at other markets. and see what's, what the potential is here in the triangle and North Carolina as a whole, do you mind speaking a little bit to that?



08:08

You had. So



08:11

when I kind of see the arc of how communities grow, and the different elements that have to kind of mature along with it, not everything, obviously, like a startup, like in your different division, like not everything kind of scales perfectly right in terms of the different things we need to do. One of the things that I believe is, in our next phase is a much tighter corporate engagement. And what's interesting is that and what I tell every city that we work in is that you have a unique set of corporations that no one else has. And, and and the engagement can can be anything from as light as being first customer. They had a customer, a proof of concept to paid proof of concept, a second customer to mentorship especially around functional things, they do well, to sponsorship of events to maybe even Being ambassadors and eventual, you know, candidates for m&a. It's the one thing we don't do well here because we don't have many headquarters and a lot of those functions come out of headquarters. But I do think there's opportunity. And I think that's the next phase for us is to kind of build those much tighter relationships and engagements.



Matt Hunckler 09:19

Feel free anyone to chime in? I know, you mentioned getting told no from companies. I don't know if any of those are big companies that you're talking to. But do you see an opportunity for what kind of opportunities do you see for those, whether it's startup companies or big NGOs? Who maybe might start venture funds or might actually



09:40

purchase things for startups? I'll do 130 second, and then I'll hand the mic over. But the secret at least right now, the secret sauce, or the thing that gets their attention is you talk about talent. And so the angle that I've shared with them is that listen to a healthy, robust startup ecosystem is essential. Silent generator and attractor for you. First of all, it starts to keep people that are, you know, students coming out of colleges and young people who are a little more mobile. It says this is the place I want to camp out, and whether and so I think the effect is more indirect than direct sometimes. But that talk track is getting their attention. And so I say why should you be motivated to engage because the biggest issue that almost everyone these companies have is attracting talent. And a great startup ecosystem is a is a great means to do something. So I've met with a number of corporate venture, or in different organizations, I think what I found to be very attracted to large corporations is the ability to incubate innovation outside of the bureaucracy of the organization in such a way that doesn't cannibalize existing revenues, even though the ultimate product may completely disrupt the organization, right? It doesn't, doesn't You don't have to navigate the bureaucracy and the committee's exceeding a small group of

people can react and act quickly. A large corporation simply cannot. So a lot of the corporation, venture arms, corporate venture organizations I've talked to, you know, they're looking to see if they can ignite the fire outside the company with the intention of ultimately bringing it in and building a business around it.



Matt Hunckler 11:25

Easy when you talk to the people who graduate from coda dream and are looking to get a job maybe at a big company, or even at a startup kind of advice do you have for breaking into tech in your first tech career?



11:38

career? Well, I tell people to be strategic to be intentional, and to go in with intention of how can I help? What can I do to serve? And kind of going back to what Chris was saying that, you know, what's really interesting about big companies is that even though they're kind of moving slowly, they really wants to be innovative. And what's interesting about the triangle is that we are purposefully innovative. I think a lot of cities kind of sit back and think that innovation is like, it's like being creative. It's like being artistic. It's just something that kind of happened like lightning strikes. But I've noticed in the triangle, there's a lot of efforts around be methodical about creating an ecosystem that really innovation can thrive. And we see that even in the universities, creating courses around entrepreneurship, and around design thinking and design in courses that really foster that kind of growth. And I think that's what's unique about the triangle. And I think that's what puts people in a great position to get these jobs at the big companies, right? Because they're, they have the skills to come in and really use your time use their time wisely to push forth the game forward. That's great advice,



Matt Hunckler 12:56

and a little bit different take on the question Brennan and his last question for the panel. I'd love to get your advice for someone thinking about starting up in the triangle area what's what's one piece of advice that maybe you wish you had or that served you? Well,



13:08

when you were starting to pay your taxes?



13:16

Back, sorry, that



13:18

sounds like



13:19

we pay them on time.



13:23

I would say,



13:27

Gosh, I must sound like the most boring person, you know, get a good lawyer.



13:32

You know, that was finding someone who could advise us on legal stuff, getting everything started finding a tax person who could explain things like Nexus in our businesses in multiple states to deal with a lot of that stuff. And then I would say, start getting in contact with people, potentially, investors pretty early. My investors might institutional investors or idea fund partners out of Durham. So Lister Delgado is on my board. And he met with me before we even released the product. We were still developing it. And so eventually, you know, 18 months later he invested in us. And so that's what I would say. I would say, you know, take meetings, introduce yourself to people and build on those relationships because eventually they may pay off especially with the lawyer, especially with the lawyer.



Matt Hunckler 14:29

Let's give it up for our first panel.