

148 Marcus Cobb Final Audio

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SPEAKERS

Marcus Cobb, Matt Hunckler



Matt Hunckler 00:00

How do the best startups create winning cultures? Well, today you're going to hear from an experienced entrepreneur who shares his secret recipe for creating a product culture that will drive growth at your startup. Welcome to the powderkeg podcast, the show that plugs you into the massive opportunities in tech hubs beyond Silicon Valley that are exploding with potential. I'm your host, Matt Hunckler. And today, I'm feeling a little bit of love for Nashville, Tennessee, okay, I'm feeling a lot of love for Nashville, Nashville, Tennessee, which is one of the hottest tech hubs between the coasts this week is 3686 Festival, which is Tennessee's global virtual event celebrating tech and innovation across the state. So today's episode is an awesome interview that we recorded back in August of 2019. With Marcus Cobb, Chief Executive Officer and co Founder of Jamma and also one of last year's most talked about speakers at 3686. Cobb is a technologist, product designer, public speaker, successful entrepreneur, just all around really interesting guy. Marcus has a highly sought after investor, mentor strategist for numerous organizations, and of course, the CEO and co founder of Jamma, which is a Nashville based music technology company that focuses on streamlining the incredibly complicated process of creating a song, sharing it with the world and ultimately getting paid and getting credit for it. something super relevant right now. And throughout this episode, you're going to hear what Marcus really how his mind works and how he thinks as an entrepreneur but also as a strategist and investor as well. You're going to get to hear him discuss his role as that entrepreneur and his own personal experiences with building an amazing team culture and in his current role as CEO and product owner You're going to hear how he

leads his team to come up with products that are really going to help his startup jammer grow and scale. Check it out. Marcus, thank you so much for taking time on a Friday afternoon,

M

Marcus Cobb 02:12

man happened to man happened to but I appreciate I was talking to you. So I'm here Bill's on, you know, kind of jumping into this beautiful entrepreneurial journey. So here we go.



Matt Hunckler 02:21

Likewise, my friend, and you've been up to a lot right now a gym for the last two years and following from afar on social media. And I definitely want to dive into that. But before we do, I always love to kind of go back to the roots. You know, where did you Where did it all begin for you? Where'd you grow up? And how did you first get exposed to this thing called entrepreneurship and technology?

M

Marcus Cobb 02:45

Yeah, you touched on I grew up in El Paso, Texas, which I'm at an age now in my early 40s where I'm really more aware of kind of the circumstances I was born out of the brought me here. All the things Alton, appreciate you for. It's funny, I was just I just tweeted when I first read outliers by Malcolm Gladwell, that book really pissed me off. Matter of fact, I, I emailed him immediately reading that book because I felt it was super, kind of we're all a product of our destiny in our environment, right? And even outliers are really lucky in the fact they are because of certain things they can't control. And being an entrepreneur, that that really rubbed me the wrong way. Now, 10 years later, that's exactly how I feel. Is that super lucky to be here while I had choices inside of my circumstances, I didn't have choices outside of those circumstances. Right. And I'm pretty thankful for El Paso is a very industrious town. It's been in the news lately, too. You know, tragedy we just had there. It really brought the nation together. I think to wrap their arms around, they'll pass a little pass has been a city that's wrapped his arms around us people for as long as I can. Remember. So I found me there. Yeah, my family there. I haven't been to a pass in a while though. So now it's on my heart to go through as possible. But I say that to say, You know that I think that foundation, even though I grew up in a pretty poor neighborhood, we had a state of the art computer lab on we had football bills, which are like, basically, ice cream trucks full of books, that kind of writer. Really, yeah. He did the bookmobile for sure where you're really out, right. I literally just found old encyclopedia brown books that I used to love as a kid. It's awesome. And then, I've told the story many times my grandmothers

were, you know, they would celebrate everything I would do, no matter how small it was just putting like an electric motor to a nine volt battery would Wow. And how they celebrated. Usually, like just a lot of it was, you know, praises and applause and Pat's on the back. You know, I think a lot of I think I think destiny forces all of us when we're kids in a certain way, I'm standing. I believe that positive reinforcement really helps sparks of destiny, Blaze into flames. Positive reinforcement goes a long way. And my grandmothers were all about that. There was no I could do no wrong in their eyes. Not I mean, except talking back control. You know, as far as, like the curiosity that consumed me, it was cool. Just as a quick anecdote, I actually got in trouble one time because from the bookmobile in the library and learn how to build or I thought I learned how to build a, a Ruby laser, and all I needed to do was find a synthetic Ruby, which was really hard to do when you're 11. And



Matt Hunckler 05:46

you know, any synthetic Ruby dealers when



Marcus Cobb 05:50

they were in the phonebook, but what I did find in the phonebook is for those of us who don't have phonebook is was gas suppliers, I could buy neon gas and wow, I remember We're calling up in this gentleman to answer the phones like Sunday no neon gas can kill you and you'll have like, goodbye, thank you I'm gonna fall so fast for I had a pretty definitely a rough childhood that



Matt Hunckler 06:15

I don't like to shed a lot of light on, but just acknowledge that it was there. And were there any any particular circumstances that you feel like really help? The fact that you went through those experience helped you later in your career?



06:31

Yeah, you know, I um,



Marcus Cobb 06:36

I was a, my stepfather was an abusive kind of angry guy, just not a good guy, not a good person at all. And if you've ever been in an abusive relationship with your kid, especially,

you get some baggage of it, but you also get some superpowers out of it. If you're lucky enough to survive it. You know, the baggage is you might be a little more codependent, you might be Was trusting in those kind of things but someone superpowers is that you know you learn how to take a hit and you learn how to get back up. And you learn how to go into an environment that would normally be full of fear, but find this bubble of home, find ways to escape even the toxic places and those tools can become really powerful for an entrepreneur, especially kind of Penny or reality. I would prefer not to have gone through that. I don't want to glorify it any way whatsoever. I don't think it's a necessary ingredient. But I do think that you know, I am fortunate that I'm a little stronger today I really don't, I'm not afraid of much, you know, except maybe my kids growing up too fast. So with that in mind, those elements really made me escape into school, more escape in the books more and I played.



Matt Hunckler 07:59

Were there any books between ticular that for you are very inspiring and I imagine to be able to turn that kind of experience into an opportunity and to your point I would never wish that experience on anyone in the world either but to be able to turn that into opportunity is pretty amazing a superpower in and of itself.



Marcus Cobb 08:20

Yeah, I would, you know, definitely encyclopedia brown books. I thought I kind of was like a Peter Brown. It's awesome guy this wit beyond his age beyond his years. Yeah, I don't know if you remember Calvin and Hobbes books. Of course, I there was something about you know, as much as possible. It was an imaginary friend a toy. He came alive in the books in a way that I fantasize about sooner. I was like, I that's my friend. You know, and the adventures that would go on together. But really, any book that I could comprehend, that would satisfy sort of curiosity. I got really big in aerodynamics as a kid. I remember I wrote a bunch of I sent a bunch of designs for spacecrafts to NASA when I was young and



Matt Hunckler 09:07

what was it about aerodynamics? I mean, a lot of kids are just like, into GI Joe or they're, you know, a little more normal skateboarding. But you're like I was into aerodynamics. What was it about that, that really intrigued you?



Marcus Cobb 09:24

I've never I've never been asked that question before. When you ask me I, my, I think subconsciously it was wanting to fly. You know, I'm one of the fly away. And there was a science to that there's a science to and science was always fair. I think subconsciously. It makes you feel pretty powerful like to embrace the sorcery of science and to find a way to understand it and manipulate it to achieve these really amazing results. So as a kid, when I you know, learn about airfoils and the dynamics of power and thrust, that was a promise that with the right tools, I can fly And I even tried to build an airplane once with my brother as a as a test pilot, but we were low on budget as well. So our airplane was actually a shopping cart with a two by four across the top of it. But that's awesome. We did have an ejection seat made out of a stroller and walkie talkies just in case you happen to fly. I was we were very you never know. We were optimistic kids.



Matt Hunckler 10:24

Like the optimism goes a long way.



Marcus Cobb 10:26

And again, you know, that's kind of a that's actually also part of the the Mexican culture that is prevalent in El Paso is that there's everything as a community project, you know, it's it's not just one person there were probably eight to 10 other kids helping me build this airplane and nobody's afraid of work hard work is just in our blood also.



Matt Hunckler 10:51

We're either Tom Sawyer kid that was



10:55

That's awesome.



Marcus Cobb 10:55

Yeah, I was, you know, yeah. You know, it's just so thankful. Looking back So, that backdrop really high school years were tough, but I think a lot of that was there. And the consistent. The one thing that was a little more pliable was computer science, right? I could I could get if I could just get to a computer, I could do something and explore some new magic. And so there was a, an old school graphic language called Apple logo. There

was a little turtle on the screen and you could basically send signals to the turtle like go left go right, you know, and the turtle which now looking back was like poop was basically aligned to follow the turtle. And you could draw anything right so those those were my first programs. I think I remember that. I think



Matt Hunckler 11:45

I remember I didn't have the attention span for it. I think I remember that



Marcus Cobb 11:50

way. You're talking way back. I was so I literally built a Choose Your Own Adventure book game, using Apple logo. That's so cool. Cars, my kids, my wife 25 cents and blow pops to play and I carry that floppy disk around with me for like three years just continuing like



Matt Hunckler 12:07

when the disk was actually floppy, literally a floppy disk



Marcus Cobb 12:10

512 K, which was massive.



Matt Hunckler 12:15

I remember that I was always using old computer gear and hang on stuff together.



Marcus Cobb 12:21

Right? It's like there was this is a really simple you Tinker and lights come on. And you know, there's something really rewarding. Magic lights come on. It's magic. Exactly. It is. And I had a computer science teacher, my first formal setting was in my senior high school. And he really, again just kind of celebrated saw how quickly I was picking up Visual Basic the time and let me my buddy teach class halfway through the year as a way to, he came out so she's like, Hey, guys, look, you're picking this up really quickly. you're skipping ahead in the chapters. There's not much more I can teach you except to teach you guys how to teach yourselves and Do that you guys are gonna teach class for the rest of the school year I already cleared it with the dean it's a done deal he was a no I've tried to find

a couple times with that was actually became a turning point in my life.



Matt Hunckler 13:11

Yeah. How did that feel?



Marcus Cobb 13:14

I joke all the time when I tell the story to kids that I was pretty short sighted when I when I got that information. Because there was this really, really pretty girl my class name is Missy and I got in trouble all the time for hanging out Mrs. desk and talking to her, you know. And then my first thought was now I can talk to Missy as much as I want to. And so, that was my teenage mind. That was my first out there. But it made the school paper and I went to a great school in Las Vegas, Nevada, called Cimarron Memorial at the time and it made the school paper and again the school itself had a culture of really setting kids free. It was mostly a wealthy school upper middle class and upper upper class but there are a few of us that were lower class. And it didn't matter the school was just from a melting pot and our friends was anyway. One of the people got ahold of that kind of news article if you will, was a woman by the mushrooming gang. It was since passed on her daughter went to the same school I did. We were all having the same friend group. And Charmaine was the first entrepreneur I ever met in my life. What How old were you? I was 19 actually the time so I was 19 and I didn't even know what entrepreneur was. I definitely wasn't sure what I was gonna do for work at this time, you know, is jobs weren't huge, at least in my in my purview. That was a really career. And this woman who decide about herself was so amazing that one day she surprised all of us with an Easter egg hunt, and all the eggs had lowa us. As kids, we thought we're just, you know, entertaining this crazy old lady before we could eat them, but in fact, she had everything from like \$500 for your college books to your class. Spring paid for in her backyard. That's the kind of heart she had. She gave away a lot of money that day to kids who needed it and kids who didn't need it because she just felt compelled to do so. After that, she wants me She's like, Yo, man, I heard you do computers. I saw your name in the school paper. You're a genius. Like Yes, ma'am. Thank you. I appreciate it so much was a hire you. You start tomorrow I'll pay you X dollars at the time was 20 bucks an hour. Wow. So that only was huge, man. I mean, I was living in section eight housing their projects at the time, right. And so this woman was making me this offer and what was a mansion at the time? So he's about to tell two cities that she changed my life because what was so magical about hers even though I had this really turbulent background, she was everything I thought it wasn't. She was, you know, very Hollywood in a way Tom, you know, big blonde hair everywhere and go bangle bracelets everywhere her red sports car and you know, it's for things but in reality her background was actually worse than mine. And one of the most amazing things she did for me was

attack what I call the poverty mentality. And the sense of the Cinderella complex of feeling like someone owes you something and wishing hoping for your fairy godmother to show up right. And that's a really that's actually one of the most dangerous things I think one of the downsides of some forms of welfare is that you You're always waiting to be held to rescue. She wouldn't tolerate that. Like I was Mom, I was physical by school mom was a nickname, you know, respect was, I went through physical abuse like me me to get to work. My family my parents who are not very nice people might either get to work I don't wanna hear and all my excuses will fall flat. The only thing with only is we have was laser work. And that was a turning point my life



Matt Hunckler 16:57

for someone who has that Cinderella mentality and I think if most people if they're honest with themselves has that somewhere in the back of their mind, maybe maybe some more prevalent than others? How, how can they maybe start to quiet that voice or start to replace that voice with a more empowering message?



Marcus Cobb 17:21

I mean, the one consistent currency of destiny is diligence, which is painstaking effort. No one can take that from him. And when you start seeing the reward of that you don't want anyone to, I think all of us when we endure some level of pain, we can't help but romanticize about someone soothing our pain, and I like to think on the one voice everyone has is the one scream, we all have an alias I have value. And I think we all need love. We all need people to acknowledge that value in us and sometimes being rescued is a promise and maybe even a false promise that people rescue us because they see our value. And the downside of that though, is that no one can actually carry your destiny and theirs at the same time. Hmm. So while people can meet us where we're at, and they can inspire us, like, like from a did me and many, many others along my life, that's the difference is that you have arrest points but you can't just lay in someone's lap until until the song goes away. You fill up you fill up your tank and you you continue to pursue your destiny in my opinion that that seems to be what I've learned on my life and even when I read biographies of many people I study that seems to be consistent across the board.



Matt Hunckler 18:41

Yeah, that's that's good feedback. Well, it sounds like that sort of like coaching and nurturing



18:50

was met with commitment and and follow through your on your part. What was your next big breakthrough?



Marcus Cobb 19:00

Actually, it was a it was kind of a a bit of a whitewater rapids after that I got hired to join this marketing company was growing really fast. They had a falling out with their resident manager at the time, they had over 300 employees, couple of vocations. And I was just there. So they put me in as kind of a Acting Director of it at the age of 19. And the job was relatively easy for me. I loved it, you know, as both hardware and software and I got to learn from other managers how to be a manager at a young age, which was cool. And then I got picked up by Microsoft's really after that on their, like healthcare innovations team at the time. And both of those were pretty striking breakthroughs for me, and then it just kind of took off from there now, not to say I mean, there were a lot of speed bumps. You take a kid like me and you throw me into corporate America, you're I have since been bought Give me some learnings. Do you



Matt Hunckler 20:01

remember a particular instance, that was particularly challenging to get through or recover from or maybe not recover from?



Marcus Cobb 20:09

Yeah, I just I just think the norms that we take for granted in business and in everything from email etiquette to I one time showed up late for a meeting with Microsoft executives to show off our tech that we built with between Microsoft and web and at the time, and this was really breakthrough tech. And I was the lead on it. I was the youngest person on the team and I was the only person without it without an advanced degree. And I think a little bit of arrogance when it came with that the time because I was meeting with 90 minutes late with Starbucks on my hands and I had no idea what was wrong with that scenario. I got pulled aside and actually fired from that job. Not too long after that, just for those those reasons. And that was one of the best fires we ever had. It was a wake up call. Unfortunately, Microsoft mind me back years later different roles. But, you know, I, it was definitely my character had to catch up with my talents. And I had to learn that invisible language of respect and regard with people by just respecting their time showing up being responsive, but it was not an overnight thing it means



Matt Hunckler 21:24

what does that word character mean to you? And how can people whether they're an entrepreneur or they're a software developer or the project manager, how can they develop character faster?



Marcus Cobb 21:39

I'm not sure I want to project my definition of character although people because it's pretty intense. But you know, I come from a you know, Baptist background kind of fire brimstone type of character. So it's not quite that what I want. But those you know, there's there's still some biases there. I think one definition I heard for integrity that always stuck with me is it integrity is keeping your word to your own heart. And it's take that a little too far for the company standpoint, but I still lean on that. Because if you hurt if you make a promise that you end up suffering from a little bit of pain for you're less likely to to use your words and promises slightly the next time, right, you kind of hold yourself accountable. And I think that's really what that what that means. So I think character is really most manifested when your life is bigger than yourself. And there's a general healthy regard for other people around you. And I think those ingredients, the more you have a regard for people in a healthy way, your character will kind of find his will find itself.



Matt Hunckler 22:50

What were some of the benefits that you cultivated from developing some of that character and applying it to your career? And how did that kind of set you up to what you're doing now? As the founder and CEO of chambre



Marcus Cobb 23:03

Well, on one hand, I've had some really amazing mentors and managers along the way. I grew up in an era while I'm learning this computer science stuff, there are these really big scandals on the screen like Enron at the time, right? Sure. It fascinates me that 30 people in a board room I know the exact number was but you know, 30 people in a boardroom could create such a vacuum and make so much wealth evaporates dime, would leave a crater, literally a black hole in the economy, people's lives and definitely can adjust this to me and it felt like I was really heartbreaking at the time, having had the contrast of going to live streaming as an entrepreneur and seeing these people who were so nonchalance, at least appeared that way on TV about the damage that were causing, and they were so afraid of, you know, being held accountable themselves that they the lie just went on and

on. went on and I think a lot of people fake it until they make it you know, especially me thought the startup founders you see across the board. But I think it's something different to be reckless with billions and billions of dollars people's people's think so you make a decision as a as a person. Where's your line of it, you know?



24:22

Where's your line of integrity?



Marcus Cobb 24:25

When does it go from faking it till you make it until you're suddenly a Katie Holmes a theranos? You know, what? Why do you play your cards, so to speak, I think we often make ourselves especially as entrepreneurs, because it's, there's no it's impossible to I'm going to go on a limb here and say, I think it's impossible at a startup and play by all the rules. I think that the game is rigged. And it's leveraged going into the game, I mean, even good for capital's leverage, right. So I think it's impossible to play by every single rule and some of those rules. He'll even look at people will put in roles to to maintain their power and just look at what's happening with Airbnb in different cities and what Uber went through. And its initial growth dealing with taxi medallions across different markets on So yeah, I think just finding that balance and and being aware of are you really bring in having a big caliber of people around you. I mean, I really think that she Kay Holmes thought that she was bringing saving the world in her own mind and convinced herself that it was worth it was worth it. But when you stop heating, all the advice and the Warriors around you, I think you've gone too far.



Matt Hunckler 25:39

Absolutely. Absolutely. And it seems like that momentum that you built through your career, while maybe there were setbacks along the way, get fired from Microsoft. Yeah. Pick yourself back up and threw yourself back in the ring and said, Okay, I'm gonna learn from that. I'm gonna take that lesson and move forward.



Marcus Cobb 26:00

Yeah, very much. So I think taking responsibility is also empowering yourself to fix it. You know if it's my fault, then I can fix it. Yeah. I like that.



Matt Hunckler 26:11

When and I I know it's been a couple years since I've heard your full pitch on, on jabber. But I've certainly read the headlines as you've raised some money more recently and love what you're building such a cool product. How did you come up with it?



Marcus Cobb 26:30

We're geniuses. That's actually what it is. We're just you know, my fairy godmother flew in through the window like Marcus, you've worked so hard here it is. Now here was your billion dollar plan. She rolled it out for me I just you know, we just ran with that. That's



Matt Hunckler 26:44

what you sent her my way.



Marcus Cobb 26:47

I'm gonna text her right now. They go see that man. A lot of falling forward man actually it's it's it's also it's again, it's also a tale to cities on one hand to Ember is the future. epitome of what my dream job would be as an entrepreneur, even though I've been entrepreneur for a long time, and I've had some success, financially and in other ways with that, I never really felt like I arrived writing. I just got better at making money. If you're doing it for as long as I have, you're not making money, you can't get profitable, you probably do something else. But, you know, when I would, and I imagine a lot of leaders feel this way too, when I would read, you know, Michael Dell's book or Howard Schultz from Starbucks, his book, put your heart into it, or her story stories about Edison or Bill Gates, especially, I mean, one of my favorite stories of all time is the story of Bill Gates and Paul Allen, sort of Microsoft and are watching the social network movie about Facebook, right you. They walk into these moments where they're like, these is a Greek word called Kairos. Kairos is basically this synthesis of everything right? The timings right the people, right? The environments, right and something explosive, amazing happens. And you kind of fantasize about that as entrepreneur or at least I do. And



28:17

down the funnel feel like that's my mother right now. I mean,

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Marcus Cobb 28:21

it's kind of amazing to jam everything that as a startup entrepreneur, I would want it's it's needed. It's a bit of a blue ocean. Have you ever read blue ocean stretch strategies? There's not a lot people are doing. Absolutely. The timing is perfect, because streaming is, is forcing an industry to change that has not been able to change itself in over 100 years, and now it's being forced to really rapidly so I don't think any one company can bring about disruption. I think we write it and because disruption is there's all sorts it's chaos theory is rather silly things you can't control. But here jabber is at The home of what I think we have an opportunity to usher in this renaissance of the arts by removing a lot of the red tape the capitalist was put in the place of creativity. And all the first iteration of that is getting music creators songwriters paid faster. And it's that simple use case is incredibly, incredibly difficult and almost complex business ever been in, which is what the telco cities are. So even though I found my dream opportunity, in many ways, this mountain is bigger than any mountain never climbed before. Yeah. It's taking everything I've learned in 20 plus years about software design, team management. I've done a lot of FinTech platforms, it's taking everything and even what I came here with is not enough, right. I'm learning every single day of how to stay on the surfboard, so to speak. So it's just fascinating. I I'm excited, really up.



Matt Hunckler 29:58

That's great to hear, man. How did it all start with January? Was it something that you saw a problem that you saw? Was it a hearing someone talk about the problem?

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Marcus Cobb 30:10

Yeah, a couple of bullet points. I mean, it's, it's well as things were, it's always a started, you know, like, when I was a toddler in my grandmother's house and I wanted to play piano and I wrote all the letters on the piano keys and permanent marker and wrote them wrong. And I just started from ABCD went up the keyboard, and that's not exactly how it works. I think that, you know, I've always been drawn music, but I never saw how music and technology come together. I didn't want to design instruments or anything like that. That wasn't that wasn't attractive to me. But now the bullet points are really serendipitous horribly. So I sold a software company. My first solo I did. There's kind of this season of have extraordinary success. I was part of the early team I tickets now. And that CEO Mike Dominic sold that company for 200 and 70 million to Ticketmaster and being part of that founding team. We had a lot of swag coming out of that because we knew we built something amazing and great really, really quickly. So a lot of us want to try to reproduce that success. I went on and started another software company I sold that but by first of all

I did without that same team around me it was a bit depressing. I realized I didn't care as much about the monetary benefits of building a company. I like to build a great replaces a work so I went into a bit of a depression. Honestly. When you I think for me and I I've heard a lot viewers who felt this way. Become a bit of a Ronin when you act it out, and you It took me two years to find the light at the end of the tunnel and on purpose. And I went to a TEDx Midwest in Chicago. And for some reason, just the messages at that Ted actually resonate with me. I had some healthy cleansing tears, just about Okay, look, we can with one new purpose here, and I was I was still making money. I actually had consulting company at the time I was, we were doing really, really well. I just hated my job. I hated everything. So fast forward, my buddy's, like, Well, Mark, you know, what else do you have? Like, what are what else is in your brain? And so we did about two weeks of show Intel. I was my original co founder. And he's like, what's the deadline? Like I don't know it's kind of like a LinkedIn from this industry. Man. I see this really big opportunity there. And that became chamber. I saw because I'm everyone gets a bit of a head fake when I say this, but you know the story where I became a fashion designer for a little while. So after I sold my company, the tech company, I was just burnt out on tech. Right burns. out, we're talking you work in 20 hours a day everything hardware software, and you just use at some point in time I think you just burn out.



Matt Hunckler 33:09

I've got a buddy doing the same thing right now is started a custom men's men's wear business.



Marcus Cobb 33:17

right because it's just not attack. It's like, Billy and but actually that changed my life realizing that before I was a tech guy, and in my circle, I was the tech guy, you want something to go to market, right? And Matter of fact, when I became a designer has been an intervention they also get a dinner and told me I lost my mind and I was gone. You know, and I was ruining our mutual opportunities because I was a tech guy and now from designing fashion and then lingerie at that, you know, I'm not much used to these guys if I'm designing a fashion so, um, but I just like you know, I held on to it and it ended up being the Yin to the Yang off which would lead to chamber



33:59

breaking You know, sorry, go ahead. No civvies became you know, um



Marcus Cobb 34:05

I want to give this I want to be very succinct because it's a bit of a long story but essentially I started designing I didn't I'm not really good designer I realized the volume of designer music software now fashion, they're actually all designs and I love creating designs that would resonate with people and make them happy or change their lives and have some kind of positive value and fashion new medium so some ways that set me free from this box of just being the tech guy. And we we got pretty good at it I even though I wasn't I'm not a good seamstress, still I mean, I can I can. I can sell a means exact three step stitch. But I'm not that's not my gifts, but I could put together products design and stories and really resonate with the customer customer segment. In fact, I found it relatively easy to build a team of people that had all these strengths had been working on for years decades that I could hone into a product that was became markwayne which was the fashion line for we get a phone call one day from guys like hey, I googled you like your designs I'm doing a music video for a pitbull he's an artist Have you heard of um look we're not gonna pay you guys if you guys want to come down we need some custom pieces I really three days and like wait I'm sorry start over again. Like you all see what we can do we hang up the phone or like even design for people you know in a pitbull and baby bashes music Oh they had so sure not flew down there and that was a lot of doors across music industry for me and I don't even think Pitbull knows x i was just designer behind the scenes right. And I was this designer now and I I got an opportunity To put together girl band a guy was working for Sean Combs at Apple Records at the time as well as producers. Hey Marcus, we want to put together girl band which is kind of formula. You love music man. You love fashion come help us put together products. Yeah, are can be put together girl bam, come down. Yeah, I can see you laughing it was the hardest I've ever done in my life. It was so hard and I I never thought I'd tell the story. Um, yeah, it was just really hard. And that was such a contrast to the success I had in fashion. I was really successful in fashion with no background because I put a team around me right. And here I am a music in Chicago at the time of 8 million people. I can't put together girl banner for girls. That was infuriated, and I was like we need a beer funnel I need I need in the fashion world. I can say I'm looking for, you know a male model 510 who has experience doing suits and I I'll get 10 options to work with Right. There was no way to do that in music industry. And that's where we started. That's how I'm actually the music listing board was Craigslist. I always say anytime Craigslist is number one is something. There's a market opportunity



Matt Hunckler 37:11

for disruption for sure. So yeah, fast



Marcus Cobb 37:14

forward. That was the that was the impetus for I have to say that chamber was conceived in Chicago Board in Nashville. We had enough traction that we got into the 8071 co working space, which is a massive thing. Chicago, right. I know you're familiar with it. It's pretty cool space man. They were a Google entrepreneur Center at the time or are and so was the Nashville entrepreneur center, there was a network. So Nashville came up to tour at 71 announced this music tech accelerator that we're launching. And Howard toman who was CEO at all times, like Marcus, maybe you should go down to Nashville and check out this music tech thing. No one likes to Gago and it turned out to be life changing experience for us going natural is the best thing we ever did. Matter of fact, there's still a natural part time. It's been 2015. And I met you the first time about a year and a half after that we're talking about. Yeah. So and this brings it all to a head, we the problem I was trying to solve was a discovery problem. How do you recruit talent? And, Matt, I know you're doing some cool things around similar problem sets, recruiting talent, and you know, a lot of the right people with the right things at the right time, right. And there's a bit of a science to that. But in the music industry, the top 1% of the people make 70% a lot of money. And at the same time, 40 to 50% of that money never makes it to some of the rights holders that needed most. And we realized we had to solve that problem first. Nothing else we did at the bottom of the pyramid was really gonna have impact until we finished the inefficiencies of the marketplace, how that money moved.



Matt Hunckler 38:55

That's such a cool opportunity and sort of Genesis story and I know you You've iterated a lot on the products since then. And you've kind of it seems like you've really captured some magic in how you go about building products and probably because of the different kinds of products, all the different experiences of different kinds of products you've built from your shopping cart airplane, to your to your girlband. What is it about? What is it about sort of that culture, that product culture that you've created? There is maybe a secret ingredient that that other people could potentially cultivate on their own teams.



Marcus Cobb 39:36

I think it's about taking fear out of the environments. Um, there's this company called IDEO, which they, they're a phenomenal you've heard of them, right? Oh, yeah. Now they're a phenomenal design, think tank and they've evolved over the years but one of the famous stories is that when the computer mouse first came out, it was you know, really expensive to build and Steve Jobs approached IDEO I need a better mouse I need it for nine bucks. And I know the exact number was was literally like that. And the founder the

designers were inspired by roll on deodorant for how the ball the trackball moved across an x and y axis. And that became the inspiration for those less expensive mice. The first ones are actually laser mice, Xerox develops, um, it was done a lot of innovations like that and they, they like they cultivated an out of box thinking environment by removing a lot of the ego and pretension that is easy to creeps into design for easily. Hmm.



Matt Hunckler 40:39

How do you how do you address that? When that does come up in the culture. When that ego flares up when that



Marcus Cobb 40:49

we call it out a chamber? You know, I think top down one of the reasons I chose my co founders in the same way They know they're good at what they do. They don't have to ward that over anyone else. We're here to serve. And we're here to make a positive impact people's lives. And while we all have an ego, we have a little, we all have PTSD from high school, so to speak. It shouldn't get in the way of what's best, you know. And when everyone realizes we're all here for the same purpose, and we're here to serve, we remind people that and the Eagles kind of realize that you have to do it at the top. And I never throw titles around or if I have to do that, and there's something broken the culture. So we it's a delicate balance, everything right now we're going through a hiring burst. So every time we go through a hiring phase, it's harder and harder to maintain that standards because all of us have baggage and all this. There are plenty of cultures out there where it's kind of dog eat dog and there might even be cultural that's necessary. But at Jamba it is you're afraid of bouncing a better idea because your first day in the job and we all lose. Yeah. So how do we create a culture where we pull those ideas out to you the moment you started our company, and I will say we've arrived. But I do think culture is the most important part of design. how people feel because design is about feelings. It's about emotions. And that's all we knows when beings are experts in the world through these five plus senses, we're spiritual beings. And so design is evoking emotion on some level all the time. And if you're not aware, if you're designing from a toxic or limited place that will come through in what you produce as a product. And if you're designing from a place of servitude and high regard that will also come through because software for example, I'll end up with us. Software always has a tendency to go back to zeros and ones. It is binary By nature, but people were analog, right? So if you let your tech team often drive product they're going to do what the hardware wants them to do. They're going to do what the tools want them to do, they're going to stay in those boxes. And you have to work from the human experience backwards to to resist that gravity and make software do what is supposed to do, which is in rich people's lives.



Matt Hunckler 43:26

I love that man. I love that and appreciate you pulling back the curtain a little bit about some of the magic that's giving you guys on attraction a jammer. What just before we close here, I would love to hear a little bit more about where you're at with Jamba right now what some of your big opportunities are and and you know maybe if if some talent is listening here or they can go to check out jobs. Well,



Marcus Cobb 43:51

yeah, I was actually talking over you there I, I looked at the most important part which is hiring really amazing people. So I asked Some pretty awesome designers on my team that we, it's, we all hear right? People say this all the time, you know, hire people better than you, you're smarter than you. We actually do it a chamber and it's, we know we're doing it when our insecurities come out a little bit. We don't want to hire that person. That's the person we hire.



44:19

So,



Matt Hunckler 44:20

recruit and find those people.



Marcus Cobb 44:23

I still believe that A's attract A's and B's attract C's. I don't mind telling people that I'm one of the best at what I do. And I've honed my skills over time and if they, if they research my background, they'll they'll hear that reputation. I've worked really hard and I'm really good at what I do from a tech delivery standpoint and product level standpoint. I'm good at monetizing products. But you know, I'm not that great at certain graphics, and I'm not that great at certain operation aspects and, and so I'm really for someone who's better. If I'm top tier, let's say I'm top 4% I'm really looking for someone that's top 2% I want to win and I'm not going to lose because we brought the wrong people on board and I've done that apart many wrong people. there just weren't good cultural fit or just weren't good people for that matter. So that's the most important part, which is what jammers are now

and how do you hire a skill when unemployment is under fourth under 3%? And then unemployment in it is under one in certain markets, right? Oh, you recruit recruit on culture and mission? Um, there are people that would love jabber as a legitimate chats to change the world stock verbally. Hmm.



Matt Hunckler 45:33

Absolutely.



Marcus Cobb 45:34

Music is the history of the world. You've heard me say that before. And if we can set that free, because of the power of technology and design, what a cool thing to tell your kids that I was a part of the next wave of music, bigger than Spotify, bigger than all the labels on that millions and millions of artists lives were changed because we showed up and got to work. That's That's pretty compelling for me anyway. And I think I think it would be for other people too.



Matt Hunckler 46:05

I love that I love the culture first mission first approach to recruiting talent. If someone listening is interested in jabber and wants to follow to see if there's a job for them, where should they go?



Marcus Cobb 46:18

Well, if you want to find out that that's not that hard.



46:22

You know how bad you want it.



Matt Hunckler 46:24

I love that.



Marcus Cobb 46:27

Obviously, our socials are out there at chamber music, calm j. m, MP, our music, our handles rather. And then chamber.com we're pretty easy to find. I'm easy to find them on LinkedIn, or at chamfer SEO. But yeah, we're always looking for amazing people and even other entrepreneurs out there. If you guys want to just have that sounding board like that. I know I need to and we can all talk. Matt and I had a good conversation before this podcast just kind of catching up. So we're here here to serve.



Matt Hunckler 46:55

A Marcus thank you so much for sharing your story and I'm super excited. Because I know you're going to be speaking at 3686 this year, which is, yes. Like the South by Southwest of the southeast. August 28 and 29th. This year in Nashville, Tennessee. That's right. That's right. Wow. I unfortunately cannot make it to be there this year but wanted to give launch Tennessee a huge shout out for putting that on. That 3686 conference is incredible. And I know you're going to rock the stage there, man, that thanks so much for the love in the shuttle. I appreciate that. And I'll never, you know, forgive me. You surprised me with the article you wrote about your number. Those couple years ago, you have no idea what momentum that put into ourselves. So I love what you're doing for entrepreneurs, man and we've definitely been a recipient of that grace. So keep it up. I appreciate that. Man. That means a lot to me. Thanks for continuing to be a part of the community. That's it for today's show. Thank you so much for listening. Also huge thank you to Marcus Cobb. Make sure you reach out to Marcus and check out jambres comm you can find Links to his social profiles as well as the other people, companies and resources mentioned in this episode over@powderkeg.com. Make sure you give us a subscribe. Also, while you're there on iTunes, you don't want to miss any of these other upcoming guests. We've got some great ones lined up here. And to do that, you can go to powderkeg.com, slash iTunes, that's powdrkg.com slash iTunes. If you left us a review while you were there, I would be forever grateful. And thank you if you've already done that. Thank you so, so much. Those reviews mean everything. They help us reach more people with the awesome stories about the entrepreneurs and investors and tech workers that you hear about here on the podcast. And we're really grateful to help be a part of spreading the word. So thank you for that. Thanks for being a part of this community and we'll catch you next time on the powder keg podcast.