

Transcript

Krystal Hobbs 0:04

Welcome to Beyond the Tools, the podcast that helps contractors attract more leads, grow their business, and finally get off the tools. In each episode, you'll discover marketing tactics that work. You'll get actionable insights from other successful contractors, and connect with experts to help you grow. I'm your host Krystal Hobbs, owner of a social media agency that helps contractors attract and convert more leads. Get ready to take your business to the next level so you can finally enjoy the fruits of your hard labor. Ready, let's go!

Hello, contractors, and welcome back to another Beyond the Tools episode. Today's interview features Aaron Gaynor, the owner, and CEO of The Eco Plumbers. They are a team of 200 employees that have seen spectacular growth in recent years, with a revenue of more than \$30 million and a total dominance in Ohio. Aaron, on the other hand, had to close his first business and declare bankruptcy only 15 years ago. So he truly has a great narrative of resilience. And we discussed how Aaron has reinvented himself as a leader as a team expands when to stand back, and how to eventually empower his team and be the leader that he needs to be to get to the next level in the organization. So we cover a lot in this conversation since Aaron has so many key thoughts to give. And I'm confident you'll enjoy it. So let's get started. Hello, Aaron, and welcome to the show. I'm delighted to have you here.

Aaron Gaynor 2:09

Thanks for having me today. Look forward to it.

Krystal Hobbs 2:12

So, Aaron, I really like your narrative. Why did you start The Eco Plumbers? And so basically 15 years ago, you were bankrupt, you had to move back home, and you had to start again. I'm curious whether any of the listeners are going through their own struggles or stressful periods. How do you find that tenacity? Or how did you come across it at that point in your life?

Aaron Gaynor 2:47

There are numerous approaches to discovering what motivates you. And I've always wanted to accomplish something. I believe it was instilled in me in some way. Because, as you indicated, I created a business and it went bankrupt, and I know some people

are my story in general. But I lost everything, lost my home, lost jobs, lost my car, everything you could think of like flat broke, broke back to my mom's house around the age of 28. And I believe it was a lot of inside like, "I want to move." But the fact was that I was a single father with a three-year-old boy who slept on the couch with me on weekends or whenever I had him. And I just remember holding them up and looking at him and saying, "I promise you this won't be your life," and then I went to work. And I believe that was the first significant step toward resilience. I'd like to do something for myself. But I also want to do it for him, to show him that we're going to have a better life, that we're not going to live this way, right? And then get back up and demonstrate to him that you understand what the American dream or the dream of life should be about, right? This means that if you put your mind to it, you can become whatever you want to be. And I think that's primarily what it boils down to, having the will to accomplish it.

Krystal Hobbs 3:54

That's fantastic. Yes, and I believe that when we are going through difficult times in our lives, it is sometimes simpler to stay there for a bit. So I think it's amazing that you were able to pick up on stuff. And, if we fast forward to today, you guys have 200 employees, correct?

Aaron Gaynor 4:15

And we've now surpassed 200 for the start of this year. 30 million and more, but only 30 million in revenue piping. It's been a lot of effort. A lot of hard work from a lot of people involved, including my sister's HR managers who are here today, helped me launch the firm. My service management service manager, Braun, who I've known since we were 16 years old, has also been on the team and is still on the team today to assist their growth and development. And our CFO Mike, who has been on the team for eight years, came on and really helped us out, as have many other people who have been on this team for years and years and years, all of whom have contributed to our and their success. which includes all personal development they've had along the way, the growth they've had, and obstacles we've faced in growing a service business from nothing to something.

Krystal Hobbs 5:09

Absolutely. And I know you highlighted some of the essential jobs in your company. Now, I'm guessing that as you grew, how did you figure out the timeframe for, like, when to make specific hires?

Aaron Gaynor 5:25

No, I didn't. I mean, you try to comprehend a model such as staffing modeling. So you try to educate yourself on that, obviously, and I'll attempt to read business books to see what it looks like. How many employees should one person manage? Consider NexStar. So NexStar is a tremendous part of it for me as well because it gave you a lot of tools that you didn't have before. So, to answer your question, I'd say, I didn't. I didn't really know. NexStar helped me. And I believe that everybody in any business, regardless of whether they're in roofing, plumbing, or garage doors, has an option to join a peer group or a group that's outside of their field. And you should, because that's where I've learned from them. They also had a fantastic business coach, Jim Hamilton, who was simply brilliant to me. And he simply recounted his own experiences regarding where this occurred. This is what we hear from members, and I've met other people that are like, "Well, I screwed this up. This time, don't do it." And that's where I started to really understand most of it: listening to their stories, talking to them, asking questions, and starting to understand. Well, by this many people, you should have this many CSRs, right? So there are math equations to ratio out, which then show up on your balance sheet. But, at the moment, when you're expanding, you don't realize you're trying to run calls, do work, and hope everything works out, and you're just kind of moving forward. So you don't know unless you know, and I believe that's the key: as you start to comprehend, you start to realize your own bandwidth, such as, "Am I capable of supporting people?" Do I have the impression that I'm lagging behind? Is my retention off because I'm not able to develop relationships with the individuals who work with me? These are the instances when you should really start to say, I need to employ somebody else to do something, or mistakes are happening too frequently, right? So I think those are some more quick indicators that you just can't handle everything. You work as much as you can. I mean, I'm all about putting forth the effort. Even now, I do. But there comes a time when it starts to slip away from me. So the question is, do you learn along the way and then work in the appropriate industry? Is there an industry standard for understanding each industry? How many text messages would you like us to send you? Is it reasonable to expect a single CSR to book enough leads for six texts? Right? That's a really basic model. So just knowing when to start hiring and who and when how many managers do you need for how many fields. We look at somewhere around 10 to 15 field service techs for a manager. So you're just kind just there, depending on the managers' bandwidth.

Krystal Hobbs 8:02

Absolutely. And I know NexStar has been an important part of your development as well as having mentors and other people in your life who can show you the way, I guess, for your team. Now that you have more managers and employees in higher positions within the organization, how can you assist them in growing and evolving?

Aaron Gaynor 8:28

Try to be available, sincere, and honest. I believe that being honest when you don't know is part of the growth process. For example, I've never run a business. That will amount to \$40 million per year. I have no idea what it's like to run a \$40 million business. I'm not sure. It's something I've never done. How can I do that? How can I tell everyone how to accomplish something that I've never done myself? But we can do it if we work together. I'm sure we can sort it out together. We can learn together, and whatever those learning opportunities are, that's how I attempted to encourage her. I believe John Maxwell attempts to get in extremely well as a level three, level four, and hopefully level five leader, which more level five leaders, right? That's leadership; how to develop leaders is something I'm still trying to figure out. That's something I'm not sure of. But we do attempt to get at least threes and fours and a leadership style, right? And then, if you realize that it's actually about helping the people who work for you, answering their questions, or hearing what they're looking for, you can help them find it or discover it together. That is the best way to assist them and educate themselves on the subject. When we were discussing the potential for \$100 million, I had a question posed to me a long time ago. I asked, "Well, what do you think is going to hold you back?" and she replied, "Me, I'm the only person who is going to hold this whole thing back." So it's either how much I personally grow with the team or how much I allow others to grow. So you're a cog in it. If you don't do and if you don't grow, learn and explore around other great businesses that are larger than you; if you're a million dollars, you spend time with a three or four million company, right? If you're four or five million, you should be with an eight or ten million company. Work your way up, don't go one, three, I'm going to go try to visit a \$40 million business because that's great that maybe get a viewpoint quickly. But the bandwidth between is so small that you won't be able to work your way through the layers. Everyone wants to be able to jump quickly. But it's just learning to understand. So many people have graciously allowed me to visit their venues and do things. And I've been reading bookshelves behind me here. And I can't seem to educate myself about the way screens work, so I'm just reading a lot of books. So when someone brings anything up, I have something to go into in my

memory that ideally says, "Oh, this was here." or "Oh, I recall this in a book here." or "I remember this from a podcast I listened to." It was simply trying to impart some information. So that's what I attempted.

Krystal Hobbs 10:40

That's fantastic. And, as you've previously stated, "You're the limit to the success of the business." Are there ever instances when you find yourself in a bit of a hurry? Or, I imagined that during the phases of the company's growth, there must be times of self-doubt or that are a little bit tough.

Aaron Gaynor 11:09

Most people, I believe, were humans, correct? You must have faith in yourself. You say, "I know I can do it." As I already stated, the will to accomplish it. Doesn't come without some self-doubt when you do that well. Naturally, it does. Even the greatest athletes in the world are likely to develop self-doubt. So you wouldn't be pushing yourself past that limit if you didn't, right? But we trust you'll figure it out, get moving, and work your way through it. Yes, there have been ruts. There have been moments when we can't get out of our own way on some things, right? You've only recently begun to feel tired? You're like, everything we do is like, why is this happening? Why are we like, you just keep going back to the drawing board, over and over again, just be willing to fix the problem? No matter how long it takes, just keep going back to the drawing board, and try to stay passionate about solving it. That should pull you out of your rut; at the very least, I have our step back. I recently had to take a step back and just kind of step back a little bit. I'm so deep into the business that I'm not really in it right now, so I'm not working on it for a bit. And I had to step back and kind of reef just readjust my own viewpoint. Last year a little bit. We were having a year of growth and doing stuff. But I felt like there were things that we just could have done better. And I didn't do a great job. And I had to take a step back and look at that, reflect on myself, reflect on the organization, and say, "Okay, what is it right?" So, I believe that reflecting will help you get out of that rut and then devise a plan. You've got to have a plan because just turning up every day and getting slammed with everything feels like you're never going to get out of it. No one said yes to the plan. There was no one to say nay.

Krystal Hobbs 12:38

Yes, without a doubt. Thank you for letting me know. And I think it's essential to remember that when we talk to great individuals like yourself, we often assume that they don't have the same challenges that we do, but I believe it's essential to hear from everyone.

Aaron Gaynor 12:55

Someone says, "Everything opens up for you." Every door just opens up, and the harder you work, the luckier you get. That's only a part of it. As long as you're focusing on the proper difficult tasks. Yeah, yeah, but the more you do it, the lucky you will become. The more hours you put in, the more time you spend reading, the more you work with people, and the more conversations you have, the luckier you will be along the path, which will open up more doors.

Krystal Hobbs 13:22

Absolutely. So, let's speak about the important stuff: how can you ensure that your team and all 200 of you are working toward the same end goal?

Aaron Gaynor 13:35

That's an excellent question. Because coming in this year was a huge struggle for us. Because we have the largest staff we've ever had, we've always had more departments, some of our departments and how we used to run our business, right like, so we'd always do one, three, and ten-year plans. And we continue to do so towards the highest level of organization. And I believe we started this sooner because teams are working on it more. And some departments have done more with it; we're still wrapping up some things, but each department will have its own year. So, instead of looking at the firm as a whole, we put out a one-year plan, give them the budget, and these are high-level goals for this year and the following three years. So, for example, our three-year organic growth is 65 million. We tell them the layers of that what we believe each department should be contributing to, and then we lay out the one-year target, this year's 40 million that we believe we can beat. And then what is that by the department, and then what I've done now is just give that figure over to them in a few of the high-level things like we want retention to be at x this year. We'll have this many pupils in our school, and then we'll delegate that to the department leads and frontline managers. So, what does your one-year plan look like if every department contributes to it? What are your plans? What are you hoping to accomplish inside that to make this work? What is your vision for this department based on the vision we have given you from a higher level of an organization? How can you link your vision to that as well, correct? So they have ownership and they own that. They don't just arrive with \$13.5 million. Don't do it. We did another take with the guys and did stuff like, "How would you make it happen?" What is your vision for this department to be successful in doing that? And this year has been very powerful in having people do it and it has actually revealed certain things to them that they had never really considered or seen before. It simplified their long-term

planning. It's given them a better perspective of the year because they can understand their quarterly rocks, they can plant, and they can at least start to think about the business and think about it as theirs, which I think is really level, and then they can go talk to their field techs and other people who are involved and share. What if you go down to their level and ask, "Well, what's your one-year plan?" Isn't it true that you're an individual as a technician? What would you like to see this year? What do you desire? So, vision, I believe, has been the key. Out to share a vision with individuals, such as why would they want to work for your organization if they have no idea where you're headed or what you're doing. And it must contain some level of information. It does not need to be a lengthy business strategy. Ours is quite straightforward. It's a couple of high-level metrics, five are set from five to eight, like bullet points on it, extremely high-level bullet points to communicate, and we describe it as we go. But that has been the deciding factor. And we've been doing it for years. And it's a lot of fun to do it every year. And be somewhat cumbersome these days as the business grew, but at the same time, we kind of said, "Hey, let's let people start constructing their own in their departments, everything from marketing to HR to everyone." It's like, everyone just got even more engaged because there's this thing I heard once before about what people lookout. And it's like, what if I give you a number, when do you check out? It's like, if I tell you 500,000, maybe it's not such a huge thing. Let's see how I can assist him 500. And I replied, 1.5. And I mentioned 5 million. I said ten. I said 50 million, then 100 million, then 500 million, then a billion, and now people are starting to notice. So you have to bring everything down from the highest level to everyone. So they understand how they can participate and be a member of the team.

Krystal Hobbs 17:00

I love that. And I really like the notion of incorporating your staff in the process so that they have ownership over the outcome and what needs to happen.

Aaron Gaynor 17:13

Yes, even if you only have a four-person team, get them involved. Inquire as to what they believe, right? Give them some leadership responsibilities and tell them, "Hey, why don't you think about this over here?" What would we do if we wanted to add five people to this department? How do we go about it?

Krystal Hobbs 17:28

So, on a practical level, how do you stay in touch with your team on a daily basis? And how do you keep that team culture going?

Aaron Gaynor 17:40

We're in a manager's huddle now. So, every day, every department has a huddle, a 15-minute huddle with all of their frontline supervisors. So there's a huddle every day. Everyone is in the huddle. They go over the KPIs from yesterday. They'll talk about any difficulties briefly, just check in with individuals, share a story from yesterday, whatever it is, so fast check-ins are always going on to keep engagement so there's no such thing as being lost out there in the world conducting calls and showing up at customer houses. So we check in there, and then we have a management huddle every day at 8:30, where all of the managers check in. Go over it again, basically the same stuff, KPIs, what happened? What did we do the day before? Were we pacing this week, where we are in the month, any problems, leads opportunities. What can we do this week to work together, take care of some people, right? We assist some clients and do anything else we can accomplish this week that we haven't already done. Any of those types of top talks can occur, keeping individuals engaged and challenging one another. And then they go out and execute the day, which we just do every day. Isn't discipline like clockwork? So I think that helps maintain engagement, and you have to mix it up a little in there. We don't want to become redundant. Then there are other things we do, such as monthly spend wins, challenges, and rewards. We honor key principles with awards. There are a lot of additional layers. We do food trucks, and sometimes we simply toss things in there for "Hey, thank you." And then there are times when we do things just because we deserve it. So, yes, I think it's important to strike a balance between the two to ensure that people understand the distinction between the two because if you just start doing something all the time, and it's kind of like expected which you should do for your team as a cultural thing, it's as if I'm doing this to show how much I appreciate you and I'm doing this because we achieve something. I think one of the things I learned along the way is that you have to be able to tell the difference. The cost is that I only have five minutes with the execution up here. It's as though they're wondering, "What's the mission?" What are the key performance indicators? What's the location of the graphic scoreboard? Increase the level of accountability, and finally, celebrate. You have to celebrate when you accomplish these things. You have to rejoice. So I'm looking for reasons to celebrate. And there are numerous additional things our team does to connect culturally with that. We have Milwaukee Tools come in and bring the huge semi-trucks to go tools, we have Red Wing boots come in and do a boot, we have boot voucher things so that guys can check in boots and web Red Rain, common size all the boots here, where I'm that we're getting ready to roll out in April. There's a wide range of possibilities. We collaborate with

Nationwide Children's Hospital on several projects. We collaborate with the Mid-Ohio Food Bank. So a lot of things are constantly happening to keep people engaged on some level without becoming complicated.

Krystal Hobbs 20:17

Yes. I love that. That's so cool. I'm sure your team loves it, too. It sounds like yeah,

Aaron Gaynor 20:24

They certainly do. I mean, we'll do it like this. There's a place named roosters that serves wings. And we've done rooster weeks where we're like, we just talked to rooster and roosters, and we say come in, here's a code, and get lunch on us all week. Isn't it any time? This year, everyone adores the Roosters.

Krystal Hobbs 20:44

So, as you reflect on the last few years and the substantial levels of growth that you've accomplished, are there any changes that you've had to make personally as a leader in terms of how you approach things or how your job has evolved?

Aaron Gaynor 21:06

Yes, I think you still want to be true to yourself. However, keep in mind that life is all about reinventing oneself. I had to remake myself because I was bankrupt and didn't have anything. It began there, it began there. But I saw my mother reinvent herself as a single mother with three children who suffered, went back to school, obtained a degree, and worked many jobs in an attempt to reinvent herself. And I believe that's what it's all about. You have to reinvent yourself, but you have to know what you want to reinvent yourself into, right? It's like, "Well, what do I need to be it?" If you want to be the CEO of your organization and lead it as a CEO, you must understand what it takes to be a CEO. That seat can be multiple types of CEO, but that doesn't mean you have to be one form of CEO. There are all types of people that do various things, but you must decide who that is and then reinvent yourself into that as you go along without losing sight of who you truly are. So, sure, I've had to reinvent myself, I've had to raise my game in areas, I've had to learn to be more organized with things I hadn't done before. I've got to study numbers and other things that aren't necessarily areas in which I excel. You're the owner, and you're a plumber by trade, right? I'm a plumber by trade, so I had to go learn these things like, so you'll have to constantly reinvent yourself and, and, and be open-minded to things and realize that you're going to have to hear different conversations, different viewpoints, and you start bringing on CFOs, CTOs, operations managers, and marketing people from other industries, and you're talking to vendors and these large,

large, like, you have to be informed enough to have the educated c That is why you go out and recruit the appropriate people to join your team. We merely hired the proper folks, I always say. So, how can you know who the correct individuals are if you don't have the information to challenge their philosophy or thoughts? So, because they say so, right? People, such as you, need to know that they are by being insightful, asking questions, and being willing to dive into areas that you are unfamiliar with and ask them if they can teach it. And they're the right people for the job. So there are various approaches to meeting leadership. And you're able to stand in front of the team and tell them when you messed up and made a horrible decision for the company. I believe those are obstacles you must conquer. You have to be able to stand in front of 200 people and say, "You know what, I own it. Guys, I made a mistake here, and it's up to us to figure it out. This is my strategy to attempt it, and you can just use it." Those are the items that have changed the most over time.

Krystal Hobbs 23:28

Yeah, it sounds like you take the attitude of being down in the trenches with them, working alongside rather than above them.

Aaron Gaynor 23:39

Yes. And then COVID happened, and I set a policy with myself and Barbara, our dispatch manager, saying, "There's no way we're not going to be here every day if we expect our techs to show up." We never missed a day, even though many staff had to work remotely at times to complete tasks. That, however, was mine. Because I'm a plumber and a tech, I did what they did, and if they're going to go out there and do that to make sure that we're working on things, I'm going to be here every day to assist support them. And we did it correctly. That, I believe, is significant. It's all about spending as much time as possible in the trenches. I mean, I don't get to be on the front lines as much as I used to. But I've been working hard to get more managers in places to assist them. So I can go spend more time on the floor to figure out what's going on. So I can assist in repairing it.

Krystal Hobbs 24:22

Yes, that is significant. Cool. So, as you look forward to reaching that \$40 million level and beyond, what do you see as some of your short-term challenges or obstacles between where you are now and where you want to go?

Aaron Gaynor 24:43

It all boils down to execution. I know that anyone can say that, but it's really about

execution. We have the knowledge as an organization that we can always learn more about, but we know what we need to do. We've devised an effective strategy. We have a strategy. We mapped it out. Can we finish it? Can we carry this out? Can we maintain our focus on those things? Can we count on ourselves not to get squirrely over here and do this and that, like stay the course? So, as we progress here, I believe it all boils down to discipline. You must be rigorous in your execution, just as you must be disciplined in your planning. And I informed our team that this year is all about execution for us. For example, we must execute on items where we fell short last year, as well as execute on things that will allow us to construct our three into our three-year plan. And if we don't do a missed show, our three-year plan will fall short of our three-year plan, which will fall short of our ten-year plan. As a result, we must act. That's the end of it. The key lesson to our management team was that we needed to structure our business and each other. And this demonstrates, organizing each other, organizing our team, having more people manage and have connections with. What does it look like? What kind of meeting rhythms do we need? What type of level 10 meetings are required? Who is required to be present? How do our training programs work? What kind of training do we need to provide? We have a Learning Development Coordinator. Now, what trainees do we need to execute on to teach people? What sort of leadership classes do we need to conduct to do all of these things that firms are growing? So, at the end of the day, it really just comes down to executing on all of those things, and I know that sounds cliché, but people always say execute. But, let's be honest, discipline and execution are the most common areas where most people fall short. It's like zero, like, "Sure, I'll just do that tomorrow. Follow up on that later," or simply say, "Oh, we did the huddle. It didn't sit well with me today. I'd like to do it tomorrow." Because I'm sure you have to do it every day. It's as if it had to happen every day. If your level 10 meeting with your manager went poorly last Monday, we'll figure out how to improve it the following Monday. So it's not going to suck again, right? That's something I say from time to time because it's true. Your meetings aren't always terrible. And then certain meetings are like, boom, three of them in a row is like, wow, things move, we strike a rhythm, right? And that's fine because that's exactly what will happen. But it's just a matter of getting back up and doing it every day.

Krystal Hobbs 26:58

That makes logic, too. And I believe that as entrepreneurs, we don't always have discipline because sometimes it's a shiny thing or we grow bored. So I think that's a

great reminder to develop the behaviors that will propel you to your next level of achievement.

Aaron Gaynor 27:18

Yes, and decide what you're going to do. I think I took a wrong turn down that road. My initial company did plumbing, HVAC, and electrical work. We were building something. We were doing this, and we were doing a little bit of everything. Even when I returned to plumbing, I was dabbling with this and that, and I was like, "No, I'm just going to do plumbing. That's all I'll do until I win that and earn the right to do something else, at which point I'll do something else." And now, because we have a market share percentage, we are beginning to add HPC this year. We told ourselves that if we grew to this size, at this number, we'd earned the right to do something different.

Krystal Hobbs 27:51

Right. Amazing. Congratulations. That's very thrilling. But, yes, I believe that is a valid point. It's difficult to concentrate on just one subject, yet that's what makes the largest difference. So please tell me a little more about the school. I know that a lot of firms are you know, one of the obstacles to expansion is having employees who can do the work, so I'd like to learn about your school.

Aaron Gaynor 28:25

Yes, we went out to see Chad Peterman last year in October or shortly before October, and I believe you've mentioned him on here before, but we went out to see him in Indiana. I'd established a school out there. We wouldn't visit and talk to him so we wanted to do so in October, we visited, and we immediately rented a space already about 5000 square feet place between October and January 1, our team got all after it made it all happen and they recruited students for it, they built the school out, and they built the platform training facility. We collaborate with NexStar, and we have a dean on the way; we call him the Dean since we are Eco University. So we have a dean who has been a Sergeant Major for 20 years and has taught in the school system for the same amount of time. This guy has been around for a while, and he's fantastic. Then we hired one of our plumbers to be our technical trainer, and everything took off from there. We had just recently started working, and we were now in charge of a school. Running a school is very different from simply running a business. So we now have a school and have trained individuals to be plumbers. Our objective was to keep training plumbers for 14 to 16 weeks so that you could have a t3 level tech who can go out and do assorted repairs and develop training, and then we have ways to come back around and do further training. So we do that right now, and it's been fantastic. It's something I wanted

to contribute because I'm a plumber by profession, and all I've ever wanted to do since I completed high school is get back to a job that saved my life, but there are many options, and the trades are amazing. And I believe that more people should enter the trades. And everyone who has the resources or the ability to bring people into the craft, create a school, or fund a training program should do so. There has been a scarcity, and we've known about it for a decade, so it's not like this is breaking news. I believe that eventually, people, including myself, began to stand up and say, "You know what, we're not going to stop making excuses, we're going to go out and produce new labor, instead of swapping." I believe that was one of my highlights of this, when our team said, "I don't want to exchange labor anymore." Everyone is simply swapping work. As if we're not doing anything to help construct the infrastructure needed to satisfy our community's and industry's demand. So our group did it. They are the ones who made it possible. So we had three classes last year that graduated, a little over 50 people in the program last year, and we simply had 20 guys come out and purchase trucks right away. So, once they've finished there, they'll go through the training program. We have a tool deal with Milwaukee, who has been wonderful to us, and some other Navien tankless, Bradford White, and other individuals have been terrific sponsors of our initiative. They do this so they know when they are finished, they're paid to learn. You have to exchange when they come out. We have a truck as long as we receive trucks right now, but we've been able to obtain trucks. We have a truck wrapped and ready to go. Most of the time they are fresh, new, and have their name in the window that says Future Rockstar so and so. We've got them out there. It's very incredible. We've seen technicians snapping photos in front of their trucks, ecstatic about their future chances and jobs. And it's been a fantastic experience to see us expand and develop, growing folks on the train. That's a very high level of it. Now we've begun working with some of the school districts Hilliard City Schools has come and talked to us about and some other individuals about incorporating this into their program and seeing what we can accomplish as we enter our second year of this program.

Krystal Hobbs 32:03

Amazing, I bet that's very rewarding as well to kind of take someone from scratch and build them up.

Aaron Gaynor 32:11

Yes, it is, and it is one of the most fulfilling things we've done. We've done some wonderful things for the food bank, hospitals, and other organizations. But they are fantastic for those in need, but it's also rewarding to say, "Hey, we've given this young

kid an opportunity and a profession where they can earn a pretty good living," because most people believe plumbers don't make that much money. Making over \$100,000 a year, that's a pretty decent living, even without a college degree or spending money. As a result, it is rewarding. See how people come and transform their life. And we have guys go back and tell us where they were two years ago before we had the academy, and where they are now. People who were in the school during the first round are already returning. It's fine. It's incredible to witness.

Krystal Hobbs 32:59

So, Aaron, I know this interview has been jam-packed with incredible insights. As a result, I greatly appreciate you sharing those. Do you have any final words of advice for contractors and home service business owners who are listening to this and looking to grow their business?

Aaron Gaynor 33:22

On this one, I may sound like a broken record. But I do a lot with this. So I utilize it here at my office, as well as on other podcasts or places I've previously spoken. But I remember hearing myself remark earlier that the will to do it said that. So there's this quote I recall seeing a long time ago. JFK asked Dr. Von Braun what it would take to launch a man to the moon and return him safely. And the man in charge of the Space Program at the moment said these five words: "the will to do it." That's it. If you think about it, nobody knew how we were going to do what we were going to do. But as long as we have the will, we'll work it out. And then you'll have to go gain knowledge strategy, which you'll have to execute, right? So it's as if they had no choice. That's what they had to do to go through that understanding of what it would take to figure out what was going on. Then they have to stuff some poor soul into there and lock launch. So I believe it all boils down to whatever level you're at, or wherever you are, all you need is the resolve to succeed. As an example, consider the information that is currently available. There are no justifications. Join a group, read a book, listen to a podcast. We were in the era of information like when I first started in the trades and not in 1997 I didn't have half of this stuff available as I do now. Isn't it right to be able to obtain information? I've watched a lot of videos on everything, anything you want to know is available. So you're lying to yourself if you state you can't get the information. You can put together a strategy with your friends and people you can talk to, and sometimes your family isn't the greatest person to talk to because they might discourage you because they think they're protecting you. But you can put together a strategy; strategy templates are available. EOS traction is a terrific resource to utilize for thinking about

how to bring it together from a traction approach. Last but not least, it's as if you just have to get out there and do it. Whatever you're doing, wherever you are, you can do it if you just do it. Figure out some numbers if you don't know them right now. Someone asked a query, so you should ask your accountant, as someone suggested. But I'll tell you this as though it's none of your business. None of it has ever happened to me or anyone else. If you don't have the motivation to do it. It's just not going to happen.

Krystal Hobbs 35:37

Love that. I think that's a great way to end things. So Aaron, for our listeners, how can they learn more about you?

Aaron Gaynor 35:47

That's an excellent question. I'm not entirely sure. I don't have a personal page or anything. I suppose you could look me up on LinkedIn, although I don't really do anything there. I don't have much of a social media presence myself. The majority of it has come from being fortunate enough to interact with folks like you who have heard my story elsewhere and many other individuals have come before me and shared fantastic stories. But if they have any questions, they can always write me at aaron@ecoplumbers.com if you want to email me, see if there's anything I can answer or help you with. Aside from that, visit our company website to see what we're up to. However, I do not have a branding platform. I don't. I'm not selling anything to anybody on any of this stuff. I don't have anything I do this because I want to get back. It's one of my purposes in life, I wrote to myself to make it up. And you know, my goal was to share and give back.

Krystal Hobbs 36:38

Excellent. Yes. We'll provide a link to The Eco Plumbers in the show notes. So anyone can look into it. We also have your email address on file. Thank you very much for taking the time to come to the show, Aaron.

Aaron Gaynor 36:53

Thank you for having me today. It's great.

Krystal Hobbs 37:01

Thank you so much for listening to this episode of Beyond the Tools. If you liked what you heard, please subscribe, rate, and review wherever you get your podcast. I'd love it if you could also share this episode with a fellow contractor who is ready to get off the tools and grow their business. And if you want more leads, sign up for our email list at reflectivemarketing.com where we share weekly marketing insights that you can't get

anywhere else. I'm Krystal Hobbs and I hope you'll join me on the next episode of Beyond the Tools. See you next time.