

## **Career Growth: Tips on Professional Development and Organizations**

**Jad Sobh:** You're listening to *Ground Breaking: Where Consulting Meets Innovation*.

**Jad Sobh:** Welcome back to *Ground Breaking: Where Consulting Meets Innovation*. My name is Jad Sobh.

**Peter Nabhan:** And I'm Peter Nabhan. Jad and I work for ECS Group of Companies. A nationwide engineering consulting firm.

**Jad Sobh:** Today, we've brought on two industry thought leaders offering their insights on professional development. I want to introduce our extraordinary thought leaders, Lauren Zangl and Mark Mochel.

**Jad Sobh:** Lauren Zangl is a business development manager at ECS Group of Companies with a background in environmental science and business development. Her background in microbiology and environmental science positions her as a leader in environmental compliance and sustainable practices.

**Jad Sobh:** Lauren actively contributes to industry innovation through her involvement in organizations like Urban Land Institute and CREW.

**Jad Sobh:** Mark Mochel is a strategic account executive at Brightly bringing more than two decades of expertise in process improvement, program management and healthcare facility management.

**Jad Sobh:** With leadership roles at organizations like ETAS Inc. Compliance Systems and Facility Health. Mark has been recognized for his contributions as an associate member representative for 2025 American Society of Healthcare Engineers (ASHE) advisory board. Welcome in everybody.

**Mark Mochel:** Thank you. Nice to be here.

**Peter Nabhan:** Yeah, welcome. Welcome Mark and Lauren. Appreciate you both taking the time to come and join us and congratulations Mark on becoming the 2025. ASHE representative.

**Mark Mochel:** Thank you very much. Thank you. Appreciate it, Peter.

**Peter Nabhan:** Absolutely. And again, Jad, thank you so much for introducing both of our guests telling us about their bio.

**Peter Nabhan:** I think now I just want to give you both the time to introduce yourself in a way that you like to Lauren. We'll start with you.

**Mark Mochel:** Yeah, go ahead, Lauren.

**Lauren Zangl:** So I'm going to look around as Jad was saying, was environmental science. I have several degrees, most of them leading up to a career in environmental due diligence.

**Lauren Zangl:** So I take myself as an environmental due diligence extraordinaire on LinkedIn. Basically, what that means is my technical background is included with my personality; I'm able to do business development pretty easily by talking clients through a complicated process on the spot. So I started out as a project manager.

**Lauren Zangl:** I was doing project management for a year. I started building in some business development, which I'll get touch on a little bit later. And then, that kind of just started taking over and now I'm full-time business development and I'm several committees in the industry. I've been involved in a lot of professional development activities, including getting our professional staff, the confidence to get out there and do more professional development in the industry.

**Peter Nabhan:** That's cool. Mark?

**Mark Mochel:** yeah, very good. Yeah. I appreciate it. Well, you covered a lot of it in the introduction. You know, my current role in the industry. I'm very, very hyper-focused on infrastructure investment in the health care vertical health care and senior living. And what excited me about this topic today is, you know, professional development and how we expand our knowledge base, if you will. Prior to getting involved in health care, in 2016, I worked in the automotive industry. I worked in the banking and finance industry a little bit. What I found through all of those transitions is that all of those experiences, even though they were gained in other industries, all translate into the work that I'm doing now.

**Mark Mochel:** So academically, I have a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. I also have an MBA. I've kind of seen the technical side of consulting as well as the business side, which I think is very, very relevant to the topic that we're going to talk about today. I appreciate you giving us a couple of minutes to introduce ourselves.

**Peter Nabhan:** Sure thing. I love how both of you have the combination of consulting background, technical backgrounds and also business acumen. So you're able to become that bridge to solve problems more effectively. I think that's kind of a unique trait to have. And a lot of people in our industry would aspire to pursue that type of career track.

**Peter Nabhan:** So I think one of the first things that comes to mind when you're trying to get engaged with professional organizations is a lot of us are busy. We have our day-to-day jobs. We work for 40, 50 and 60 hours. I think a lot of people have a hard time finding inspiration to go out and maybe seek professional organizations or maybe join professional organizations.

**Peter Nabhan:** I really want to hear your thoughts on how it was for you to find your inspiration to join and what you would recommend for our listeners.

**Lauren Zangl:** So yeah, the thing that's got me out into the industry the first time was, it's an old adage, but it's, "It's not what you know, it's who you know" and really, if you think about how your career advances, you get more and more specialized, especially on the technical side, more and more specialized in a specific subset of your industry.

**Lauren Zangl:** So, being able to one, share that with industry partners, or clients, that part of it will bring a lot of new business to yourself, which is part of advancing your career. And then you have to

learn the soft skills of talking to someone to the sales side. Then the on the other side, it's. Everyone else is doing the same thing.

**Lauren Zangl:** Learning what everybody else knows is super important because then you can do the reverse. And when you are stuck in a problem, you know who to go to. This is internally and externally as far as internal colleagues and external clients, industry partners. So having a big database, helps with your being able to solve problems quickly and efficiently and then just having conversations about a specific problem will probably lead into new projects that are coming down the line.

**Lauren Zangl:** That's just how you build your career, with who, you know.

**Peter Nabhan:** You make a very good point. It sounds like you're getting out of your office, you're pushing your boundaries, you're trying to get uncomfortable so you can. You can get out in the industry and understand the landscape. And that's essentially your why, it is to get out, meet people, learn how to do things differently and learn how to sell.

**Peter Nabhan:** And I think that's a great perspective you shared, Lauren, from your perspective. I would really like to hear what Mark has to say about that topic.

**Mark Mochel:** Yeah, I think we think about the inspiration. You know, why join a professional organization or a membership organization?

**Mark Mochel:** And it kind of cuts two ways. The first is, from my experience, especially working in multiple industries, which is where my customers are, so to speak. So, survival is a good motivator. And what I mean by that is, the tactical view of this membership is where our network is; that's where the customers are; as Lauren mentioned, that's where the other industry experts are. So that's the place to be. I think going beyond that, the real inspiration for me is the more I've been engaged with professional memberships or, you know, even trade shows or whatever you want Talk about educational events.

**Mark Mochel:** Talking to folks outside of the work environment is usually when you can build the strongest relationships. Because we all get to step away from the day-to-day, as you talked about, the busy, the phones ringing and all of that. But I've gotten the most networking done in an environment where everybody's kind of free from the tasks of the day.

**Mark Mochel:** And that's when I've had some of the best conversations, some of the best learning opportunities. You know, maybe when everybody gets to take a little bit of a breath. So we have to create that opportunity for ourselves. And I think that ultimately is the inspiration because if we don't, we'll be consumed on a day-to-day basis by everything else that's coming at us.

**Mark Mochel:** Does that make sense?

**Peter Nabhan:** It absolutely does. I really like how you framed it in a freedom kind of framework, like getting out of your day-to-day. Your life is not just the work that you do on crunching numbers or putting reports together, or even in your case as an entrepreneur, creating a product, but it's also what you do outside of that and feeling yourself.

**Mark Mochel:** If you don't create that space. I think you get consumed, you know, by the email and all that type of thing, we can work on it.

**Peter Nabhan:** We can work on Excel the whole day and never get out of the office.

**Mark Mochel:** Peter, to add one comment to that, I think through the pandemic, we made a big move with all the teams and Zoom and all of that.

**Mark Mochel:** I think reentering the membership space and almost learning again why it's so important to interact with peers when colleagues are in a more natural environment is an important skill set we need to keep sharp.

**Peter Nabhan:** Absolutely. This entire podcast would not have been possible, Mark, had I not met you at one of the ASHE conferences, for example. It's definitely well worth it. And I do like the fact that Lauren, you mentioned earlier that networking is unbelievably important. It's about who, you know and I really want to hear from both of you from your perspective. When the engineers or the scientists or anyone in our industry goes out to do networking, a lot of times that's where it stops.

**Peter Nabhan:** Like, there's no transition from networking to building a stronger bond, stronger relationship, maybe even developing into a mentorship type relationship. And because I feel like those relationships would be the ones that would help you give back to your community and give back in a stronger sense of the term.

**Peter Nabhan:** So what do you think from your perspective, what's a good way for our listeners or anybody interested to take it from that networking to the next level?

**Mark Mochel:** Yeah, I'll start. I'm curious to hear Lauren's thoughts as well. I think part of it's repetition. Meaning if you join a membership or join an organization, go to one trade show or go to one educational event, you might get something out of it.

**Mark Mochel:** But to me, the benefit of like in this case, the American Society Of Healthcare Engineers, the repetitive engagement and you know, you meet five or six people or 10 people the first time and then the next time, you meet more and it's very exponential in terms of, getting introductions and so on. But at the end of the day, you get out of it what you put into it.

**Mark Mochel:** And what I found, is that if I go to a trade show, I might see some folks that stay in the exhibition hall. And don't take advantage of the educational sessions that might be going on. So you have to invest and and networking is not a one way street, right? The value in those relationships has to come from both sides.

**Mark Mochel:** And I have a lot of clients today that will call me and ask about a problem. And it's not a problem I can solve for them, but I know somebody who can and that referral and that cross pollination of skills, I think, is just extremely important, but it does take effort. Lauren, what do you think

**Lauren Zangl:** The repetition part of it is something that a lot of people mix and it's a good thing to keep track of, especially for people just starting to enter the industry.

**Lauren Zangl:** I gave a talk a while back to some of our leadership here at ECS and one of the things that I brought up was this rule of seven touches and basically what that means is. When you meet someone, it's. Seven touches to make any progress on the relationship, whether that's a sale, a referral even just a project lead, anything like that, it takes seven contacts with someone.

**Lauren Zangl:** So that could be just meeting them for the first time. Then that's touch number one, connecting with them on LinkedIn is the second touch. Then there's sending them happy birthday when their notification pops up on LinkedIn, they have a birthday. Just any one of those types of contacts where your name is in front of in their inbox on their screen and you're in front of them. That's a touch and it takes seven times. So that repetition, is what makes a valuable relationship where they remember you. From there, that's when after seven touches or so, sometimes it may take up to 21 touches, then you'll learn what that relationship actually is going to look like.

**Lauren Zangl:** So, whether you can evolve that into a mentorship, you can kind of start taking direction on. Asking for professional advice, asking for career advice, even a professional or a personal mentor, you don't know until you continue to follow up constantly, keep people in front of you or stay in front of other people.

**Mark Mochel:** I like that. Lauren, if I can just add a quick comment. At the end of the day, the transition from networking to mentorship to me is all about trust in relationships.

**Mark Mochel:** We started out on this topic. I think we're probably going to hit it six more times. Networking is more than just trading business cards. It's trading ideas. building trust, building high-integrity relationships where I can give somebody advice or I can receive advice from people that I know I can trust, then that's where we take it to that next level.

**Mark Mochel:** I have contacts that I consider myself to be both a mentor and a mentee. With the same person, depending on the subject at hand. So, when you get to that point, you're just a phone call away from what could be a really important resource either way. I really like that Lauren. How you talked about the repetitive or reinforce that repetitive nature because I think it's very, very true.

**Jad Sobh:** Yeah it's kind of funny that this comes up, right? Because this will be once this episode airs or publishes, this will be our fourth episode, right? This is now the third out of those four episodes where mentorship has become a very large talking point. And it's almost like one of those things where it just keeps coming up.

**Jad Sobh:** So it must be pretty important for us to have that, that aspect of our professional careers. And so Lauren and Mark, obviously, feel free to chime in on this one, too. You know, many people are unaware of the skills that you can gain and certifications that some of these orgs offer and you guys have both kind of alluded to it maybe a little bit. So, do you guys care to elaborate a little bit more on that aspect of a professional organization?

**Lauren Zangl:** Yeah, absolutely. The organizations getting involved, especially not just attending the open networking events, but getting involved on a committee, helping to plan events, helping with the policy changes. If that's what the association organization does, that helps build soft skills as far as remembering details that don't necessarily pertain to the specific expertise that you have sitting at your desk, being able to talk to someone, being able to pick up the phone and make a cold call, even just interpersonal relationships. I mean, it's really what a lot of these associations and organizations are for and having.

**Lauren Zangl:** Those soft skills is one of the most important things that you can develop. If you want to advance your career, think about the leaders in your company. They're all able to talk to anybody and everybody about everything. So to get to that point, you have to work at it and continue doing it and getting to the point where you can talk to people like this, it's just practice and attending events is practice for using it, building those soft skills.

**Lauren Zangl:** There's a ton of different types of soft skills you can gain from getting involved in these associations. It may be just someone's having a rough day and you just met them. It's being adaptable and helping them through a rough patch, even though you just met them. You can apply that to your colleague who's just had to put their pet down or something like that.

**Lauren Zangl:** Maybe it's just something you learn in the process. There's a lot of soft skills. You can learn as far as certifications go. I mean, there's the educational part of a lot of these associations is really important for, like, for example, ECS Attending the industry educational panels that a lot of our associations host for people, it's for the people in the industry.

**Lauren Zangl:** It's good to, even if it doesn't affect your daily job. It's the learning where the industry is going, where the trends are, hearing the problems that are coming up for our colleagues who may be further up pipe up the pipeline and we're going to deal with this project in a couple of months. They may be highlighting these issues on these panels.

**Lauren Zangl:** So the certifications can come through there. And there's the engineering-specific ones, which I think are really important. I believe ASHE is one of them that provides the PDH, PE's, PE, PDH's continuing education credits. There are a bunch of different names for them. And then also there's other, as far as other ways to get like softer certifications, I guess you can call them.

**Lauren Zangl:** LinkedIn is a good way to get these soft skills. LinkedIn learning is a really valuable resource. Similar to LinkedIn Learning, which is probably the most accessible to a lot of people associations like the Urban Land Institute (ULI), National Association for Industrial and Office Parks (NAIOP), they have databases of courses that you can take just in your free time that are basically university-level classes that may be able to teach you something and you can get a certification from it, but you could be learning something about what your client is doing. And if you learn what your client is doing on a database and daily basis, that may help you solve problems for your clients, making you a better industry partner.

**Mark Mochel:** Yeah I agree with all of that. I mean, I think the, at the end of the day, in some cases, credentialing is a necessity to do business. And, you know, talking about the healthcare industry in particular and ASHE's Certified Healthcare Facility Manager, Certified Healthcare Constructor, it's not a requirement per se to work in the industry, But it certainly has a huge street cred, if you will in some cases, you know, for me personally, it was twofold.

**Mark Mochel:** One, I was new to the industry. I was new to the healthcare industry just 10 years ago. So, I had to get up to speed pretty quickly on some of the specific code and compliance requirements. And then the second thing on credentialing, I just assumed for a long time that a certified healthcare facility manager that you had to be an owner, meaning you had to work in a hospital setting.

**Mark Mochel:** So I inquired and come to find out as a vendor partner in the industry. I'm also eligible to receive that certification and I had to make the investment of time and resources to do that. But it

really rounded out my skill set because it gave me an appreciation for all of the things that my customers have to deal with, not just those things that I'm mostly engaged in.

**Mark Mochel:** So I don't think we can emphasize enough. The importance of education, because to Lauren's point it to me, it's about credibility. It's not about the credentials but the credibility that comes with the credentials that can make us trusted advisors to our customers. So great topic.

**Peter Nabhan:** Thank you so much, Mark, for sharing that. The one thing that always comes to mind when I think about the credentials is not necessarily the letters but the process, the educational process that you have to go through to get the credentials. And there's an unbelievable amount of knowledge. I'm just that person that's very passionate about continuous learning.

**Peter Nabhan:** And I think It's great that organizations do have those a path to just like you said, certified healthcare constructor, CHS with ASHE or others. So absolutely crucial thing that's very helpful.

**Jad Sobh:** Great stuff. I mean and so we've kind of hit on, developing those soft skills or maybe getting some of those, certifications.

**Jad Sobh:** Maybe going from there and evolving into a mentor and through your time spent with these organizations, it opens up the door to serving a wider community. Right? And so we'll start with Mark. And then obviously, Lauren, we would love to hear your thoughts. In your experience, guys what are some of the key leadership traits you've seen people develop, you know, through their involvement in these different organizations?

**Mark Mochel:** It's a great question. I think I'm going to throw a couple of weird ones at you. Humility in some cases, honesty and integrity. These are character traits as much as leadership traits, but what I found and again, I'm using my example of entering a new industry at a relatively late stage in my career.

**Mark Mochel:** I didn't lack the confidence to engage in business topics and to engage with my clients. Potential customers, but I didn't have the skill set. And so I learned very quickly. If I don't know the answer to something, don't make something up. Be honest about what you know, in my case, what I know and what I don't know.

**Mark Mochel:** I learned very quickly to be very, very transparent about that. And then ask for guidance. So, you know, I think from a leadership perspective, a leader that thinks that he or she knows everything is a dangerous leader. I just kind of been blunt about that. I think bringing in what you know and being willing to delegate and, or reach out and ask for help, some of my current customers are also some of my best mentors. I can call them at any time and say, "Hey, I've got this crazy idea. What do you think?" And they'll tell me, yeah, that's great, or yeah, it is crazy. Again, I come back to integrity, humility and honesty. That and trust.

**Mark Mochel:** That's the framework of any, any person, whether they're a leader or, you know, in a quote-unquote, "lower position" in the organization, treat everybody with respect and be honest in those engagements, and it'll take you a long way.

**Lauren Zangl:** Yeah, I mean, from my perspective, what I've seen. The people evolve with their leadership skills through associations.

**Lauren Zangl:** There's kind of two things, really one, just to kind of summarize everything that Mark just said is something that is a buzzword, but authenticity. So that's the honesty that's being true to yourself, being true to your clients, being true to your background. Just, a lot of people have the imposter syndrome when they start engaging in community outside of their daily jobs.

**Lauren Zangl:** It takes a time to build that authenticity, but it's something that's super important to develop your career, especially more towards the management side. You need to be authentic, otherwise you're not going to get the trust and you're not going to get promoted. The other thing I would say was, it's a little bit more tangible, but it's the organizational skills.

**Lauren Zangl:** So if you start getting involved in the committees that you're a member of these associations, you need to be organized to remember to follow up, set up the next meeting, follow through on the action items, contact people for setting up an event in three months, whatever the case may be, you have to be organized and delegate.

**Lauren Zangl:** Really, that develops the leadership skills in kind of a little bit more less pressure type of way, but it's an important skill to have

**Peter Nabhan:** To me, it sounds like organizations do allow you to basically work out your authenticity muscle because you're trying to build trust with an ecosystem and Mark in your case, you were new to the industry and within 10 years, now you're representing a big chunk of the industry.

**Peter Nabhan:** So that's quite the achievement. I'm happy to see that and I'm happy to see you have a very successful recipe of achieving that by being authentic, by being transparent and by always saying what you know and what you do not don't know. And I think that's very important.

**Mark Mochel:** Thank you Peter. I appreciate that.

**Peter Nabhan:** Absolutely. Absolutely. I think one of the things that we're always talking about recently is all these new trends. So everybody's talking about AI, sustainability, how can we have better work life balance and these are all things that if we're just existing in our own vacuum, we probably don't get much visibility on.

**Peter Nabhan:** Personally, I feel like organizations probably play a big role in that. So I think that's one of the topics I'd like to learn from you based on your organizational involvement. How have you seen that continuous, innovation trend in organizations? Maybe, Mark, we'll start with you.

**Mark Mochel:** Yeah, I think the, it's a double-edged sword.

**Mark Mochel:** The innovation is happening so fast and we're all trying to keep up with it. I have seen in recent years more and more educational sessions geared towards, you mentioned AI. It's all over the place, but we don't really know what it means yet or how we can apply it. I think for me, seeing what's coming down the pikes, so to speak, it's always interesting to see that I would never get access to that unless I just went out and started googling it.



**Mark Mochel:** What I enjoy the most, though, is the conversations after these sessions. So when I see a session that talks about possible uses and we'll just use AI because I think that's front and center. Possible uses for AI in healthcare. Well, there's a million different things. Some of them are clinical, some of them are not and so on and so forth, but it's the conversation afterwards where we're all sitting around scratching our head.

**Mark Mochel:** You know, what does this mean today? How do I apply this today? So, you know, what's the phrase? "Always swim with a buddy at a minimum." It helps me to digest all of this new stuff in a setting where I can maybe ask questions or articulate and just figure out what's everybody else thinking about this?

**Mark Mochel:** Because I'm confused, right? That's the only place that I'm seeing it in an organized fashion where we can really digest not only what some of this new innovation is, but how are we going to implement this? I don't know if that makes sense, but I hope, hope it does.

**Peter Nabhan:** It Absolutely does. It sounds like it gave you a safe space to discuss with maybe folks with different backgrounds, but also with a similar interest or similar type industry.

**Peter Nabhan:** And you can essentially scratch your head afterward and say "Okay, this is what we learn. This is how it's gonna impact me. And this is maybe where the trends are headed moving forward." So that's definitely a very good observation. And I'd like to hear, Lauren, maybe from you if AI has been the main topic and the organizations that you engage with, or if it's been something else.

**Lauren Zangl:** Well, I mean, I guess I can go anything, but I gotten using like the AI trend. Even just there, there's some climate change stuff that's been on my radar a lot more recently, just cause I'm an environmental scientist. But to Mark's point about having the conversations after an educational panel It just that helps the technical staff, even me, former technical person to figure out how that fits into my job and how I can use that information to implement innovation into my daily job and being a value add for my client.

**Lauren Zangl:** So if they're already thinking about it on their end, where they're talking about, like, I have a client on the panel. They're talking about whatever this is, but we are not necessarily touching it yet. But if they're talking about it, I can have the follow up conversations either with someone else in the industry or with them specifically and be like, well, how are you guys applying this across the board?

**Lauren Zangl:** Do we should it would be beneficial for us as a company to start implementing some of these policies or thoughts or something? Whatever the topic is, it helps to kind of create an edge for yourself that you are informed you're paying attention to the industry. You're paying attention to your clients and your friends and your industry peers.

**Lauren Zangl:** It just helps going back to the beginning. It just helps the whole system of, I know things and I can be a resource for my clients. It just, it helps all of it just to stay in the front edge of some of these innovations in the industry and to help implement innovations internally.

**Mark Mochel:** And I'll add another side of innovation. This doesn't sound innovative, but probably the biggest thing that also comes along with this is in many cases, this innovation is outstripping the regulatory environment that we're living in. So again, I tie back to health care.

**Mark Mochel:** We're still living under compliance and regulatory code that was written decades ago in some cases. And so even though we've got these new things coming at us, We're also living in a world where we have to interpret those within the guidelines that we're facing today. And I think that ties into everything we've talked about here, which is "How do I decipher this?"

**Mark Mochel:** Is this going to impact me today in my role? Is it going to impact me next year? But the only way to stay in front of that is to stay educated. So, in code and compliance is not typically innovative, but we have to deal with it anyway, right? Because it can have the same, type of impact.

**Peter Nabhan:** That's true.

**Peter Nabhan:** It's given a lot of space mark on what you just said for thought leaders, to be involved in the update of compliance and codes and that framework that's maybe outdated now with all the technology that we've had when they put those codes together and we had. Probably no computers, no AI none of the things.

**Mark Mochel:** Certainly nothing like what we have today.

**Peter Nabhan:** Maybe some computers do that old.

**Mark Mochel:** Yeah, well, I think of innovation is, innovation is it's an idea, right? And then there has to be a passion behind that. But there also has to be execution. And I think that's where as consultants.

**Mark Mochel:** That's where we earn our pay, so to speak: "How do I take this idea?" And how do we get it to the point of execution where it's actually generating some type of business value for the client? And I'm sure Lauren would agree we're helping lead our clients on a journey.

**Mark Mochel:** There may or may not be a discrete outcome but that execution piece is what's, that's what we're trying to figure out with AI, for example. Okay, it's a great idea, it works great, does this. "How do I execute that in a way that's sustainable, compliant and generates value for the client? For the end client" and that's that's called consulting.

**Mark Mochel:** Right? How do we make this real?

**Jad Sobh:** Right? Valuable insight from everybody. For sure. I mean, it's.

**Jad Sobh:** Professional organizations, like we said, that's where those conversations can happen very freely, you know and it's a wonderful thing. So we're going to pivot just a little bit. So, for both of you, reflecting on your careers, from a professional development and like your leadership journey, perspectives, what strikes you as defining moments in your career and what pieces of advice can you give to our listeners about advancing in those realms?

**Mark Mochel:** Yeah, I'll start. I think, you know, we talked about this national advisory board position with the American Society of Healthcare Engineers and I'm, I'm very proud of it personally. And professionally, but, the defining moment, as Peter mentioned, I was just elected by the membership to serve at the national level in the organization.

**Mark Mochel:** That was the defining result. The defining moment was three years ago when I decided that I was going to run. So, this was my third year running for the position. Obviously the first two times it didn't, assume the position, but that journey was so remarkable for me. I was pretty naive the first year.

**Mark Mochel:** I learned a lot going through the process. I ended up meeting a lot of people. And so it took time to get there. And I even tell my kids, you know, who are young adults entering their professional careers, you got to play the long ball. You know, not everything is going to happen the way you want it the first time, or maybe not the second time in my case.

**Mark Mochel:** But perseverance was a key part of it, but I'm going to go right back to where we started. You get out of it what you put into it. And for me, it was an investment of time and energy and education and networking and relationships and all of those things that culminated in a success. But the journey that I took to get there was, was as rewarding, if not more rewarding than actually getting the wind, so to speak, because I'm a much different person now in, in this industry and the healthcare industry.

**Mark Mochel:** I'm a much different person than I was just three years ago. And part of it was because of that investment that I made. So that would be my advice. If you join a professional organization, just to get a quick win, you're not going to get the benefits of the organization that you might, if you play the long ball and plant those seeds and build those relationships that are going to pay dividends years down the road.

**Mark Mochel:** So, stay with it. What did we say at the beginning? Be persistent and repetition stay engaged. So you get all the benefits.

**Lauren Zangl:** For me, I'll say probably two main defining points that have gotten me here today. Both of them came from my time prior to ECS, but also actively involved with the fact that I started doing business development. At the time, I was working for a smaller environmental firm, just one stop shop in Chicago. It was a great job. I really enjoyed it.

**Lauren Zangl:** And a couple years into that, after I had started building a network through industry associations and attending events and becoming known as quote, unquote, the "environmental person" because I was able to have complicated conversations with them as a project manager with clients. I should say.

**Lauren Zangl:** The leadership of the company started recognizing that and the basically started having conversations about promoting me into a pretty high leadership at that point. It was early and I was kind of shocked by these conversations, but it was one of those. And it didn't pan out. Obviously, I'm here at ECS and I love it.

**Lauren Zangl:** I would not change anything about it. But at the time I appreciated those conversations because they kind of gave me an external feedback on what I'm doing is right. The

connections that I'm making are valuable to the company and they see that. They want to recognize that and acknowledge it. So that kind of changed my perspective of like, keep pursuing this, keep going down that road.

**Lauren Zangl:** And I did and I loved it. And I'm full-time business development now rather than project management. I miss the project management, but I love the business development side. And then the other thing happened during the pandemic, actually. This was really a, pivotal point for a lot of people's careers.

**Lauren Zangl:** Because the industry wasn't doing any networking events, everything was virtual. No one knew how to navigate the industry through a screen at the time.

**Lauren Zangl:** There had been some other, associations that tried to do some networking stuff virtually and it was clumsy and awkward and it was rough. It was really rough. So, a few weeks into the pandemic, I decided to use my network and innovate and kind of using my technical background, break down what is a networking event and I was able to create this whole networking thing kind of using my company and this is valid for as well that all of the broad range of clients that we can work with from the environmental, the GC's, attorneys, like, all the way through the entire life cycle of projects, we have a huge network.

**Lauren Zangl:** We're kind of felt like we were the center point. So I did that and I became very well known because of that. I got a lot of work out of it. I got a lot of new relationships.

**Lauren Zangl:** A lot of existing clients that were strengthened the relationships that were super strong. It was a lot of touch points. It was going back to the rule of seven. They were getting these posts, the notifications on LinkedIn. They were seeing me twice a week. They were getting the follow up emails from me. I had multiple touchpoints very, very easily.

**Lauren Zangl:** And that definitely coming out of the pandemic, I was, I still, to this day, I get recognized like, "Oh yeah, you had the networking events during the pandemic. They were great." I give that whole story just because, I was able to innovate. I was able to be creative to create value for my clients.

**Lauren Zangl:** So, those are kind of the two points. one kind of was a little bit more internal and the other one is a little bit more external focus, but, those were kind of the two main highlights of my career so far. I mean, obviously I've had some cool stuff that's happened since then, but, those are kind of my two proud defining moments.

**Mark Mochel:** Well, we're kind of saying the same thing in different ways, Lauren, to me, it was validation. Which is important, right? For, any of us as consultants to feel like we're creating value for our customers. And yes, it's, there's the commercial side but I'm focusing on the relationship and so helping them solve problems and so on and so forth.

**Mark Mochel:** But that requires validation as well. So when we achieve this and Lauren, you were validated in the work that you did, you probably didn't know it at the time, right? But two years down the road, people are looking back to something you did in the past and it's now creating a foundation for whatever the next level of consulting is.

**Mark Mochel:** So I think we're hitting on a lot of the same topics here. And I love this, this conversation because a good friend of mine years ago, or a mentor as well, he said, "A rising tide lifts all boats." And I've always remembered that because whether it's a professional group or whether it's our companies or a professional organization, you know, it's one plus one equals three.

**Mark Mochel:** If everybody puts in as much as they try to take out, then everybody gets stronger. So I love this conversation. I appreciate the chance to have it.

**Peter Nabhan:** Spot on, Mark. Spot on. Well, very well said. And I appreciate you sharing your perspective. And of course, Lauren unbelievably creative what you did during the pandemic.

**Peter Nabhan:** Jad's gonna take us home after this one, but we try to end it with one last question.

**Peter Nabhan:** So, this is a question we ask of all of our guests. Can you share something with our listeners that's been groundbreaking for you? And this could be personal or professional. Lauren, I'm going to start with you.

**Lauren Zangl:** Oh, something that's been groundbreaking for me. I would have to kind of revert back to that. One of the last situations I just mentioned about the validation for being in a leadership position and using my experience for that when I moved from our Chicago office to our Chantilly office, the headquarters office one of the things that I really saw.

**Lauren Zangl:** I saw a place for myself was the ability to use my skills from networking to create culture internally and without going into too many details about it, but I was, I've been kind of creating some programs and incentive stuff to get my colleagues more excited about getting back into business development activities and getting using their professional.

**Lauren Zangl:** expertise to get out and build their own personal brand. So my groundbreaking thing is definitely like, there's a lot of different ways to take business development and a lot of different ways to do business development, but the trends are professional growth behind business development always.

**Peter Nabhan:** I like how involved you are in your teammates careers and them amplifying their impact.

**Lauren Zangl:** I love watching younger staff grow and become the higher managers. Like it's always very excited to see that.

**Peter Nabhan:** That's excellent. That's very cool. Mark?

**Mark Mochel:** Yeah, so kind of along the same lines and I'll start out by saying, you know, this gray hair didn't come cheap.

**Mark Mochel:** So, this is a moment that happened just within the last six months. My, my wife and I have four young adult children. So, our youngest just started his freshman year in college. My daughter just graduated from college and so we've got two other boys that are off doing their thing.

**Mark Mochel:** And My daughter had to make a pretty big decision when she graduated. Did she want to go on to graduate school? Did she want to move across the country, take the certain job? And I said, well, here's what I think you should do, but I don't know the answer, because it was this moment where I'm watching my kids now become adults.

**Mark Mochel:** And there is no playbook anymore, you know and what my daughter said was very profound. And she said, you know, I was talking to Alex, her brother and we realized this is your first time going through life as well. And I'm just holding that moment right there. And that's what I said to her. It is my first time I've never been the father of you know, a daughter who's graduating college and moving off to the West Coast.

**Mark Mochel:** So my point in all this is it reminded me that it's okay that I'm still trying to figure this out too, right? I said, I'm just 30 years ahead of you when I'm talking to my daughter. And I think it's very relevant to this topic because there is no single playbook. There is no single answer. I've always tried to just teach my kids, create opportunities for yourself without even knowing what those, where's this road going to lead.

**Mark Mochel:** And it's I try to remember it myself, even at my age now of I don't know where I'm going to be in five years. I don't know what's going to happen in the world. And so, I bring it back to this networking and making sure that none of us can do this by ourselves. We have to continue to learn, network, ask, et cetera and engage because I think it's, you know, tomorrow is a new day for all of us, right?

**Mark Mochel:** And we don't know what's in store. So anyway, a little philosophical there, but it was a huge moment for me because I realized it's not about me anymore. Now my kids are starting their careers and they're going to go through all the same types of things that I did and they're going to have to figure it out.

**Mark Mochel:** And boy, is it scary, but boy, is it beautiful all at the same time. So anyway, deep thoughts by Mark. How about that?

**Peter Nabhan:** Very nice. By the way.

**Jad Sobh:** Well, to kind of wrap things up here thank you, Lauren and Mark for everything today. I think this was a extremely valuable. podcast that's going to be put out for our listeners and just everybody.

**Jad Sobh:** So, to wrap it up, don't forget to subscribe to our podcast on Apple Podcast, Spotify, or wherever you listen to your podcast. Thanks for listening to *Ground Breaking: Where Consulting Meets Innovation*.

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