

**RYAN SULLIVAN AND GRANT GOULET OF XENITH DISCUSS HOW FOSTERING A
DESIGN-THINKING MINDSET UNDERSCORES THEIR UNIQUE APPROACH TO
MANUFACTURING**

Xenith is a Detroit-based industry leader in football helmet technology, and also produces shoulder pads, face masks, apparel and more. Xenith has prioritized design thinking in all of its product development, which has resulted in gear that transcends protection alone—designing for optimal fit, feel, comfort and style. Today, we will discuss how collaboration between designers and engineers can result in groundbreaking innovation. We will also touch on Xenith’s initiative to provide 20,000 face shields to Detroit area Hospitals

Olga: [00:00:00] I'm Olga Stella, the Executive Director of Design Core Detroit. Thank you for joining us for Season Two of the Detroit City of Design Podcast. As stewards of Detroit's UNESCO City of Design designation, we aim to raise your awareness of how design can create conditions for better quality of life and economic opportunity for all.

Designers are professional problem solvers, and in Season Two we will discuss the value of design to business and society. I'm excited to be speaking with Ryan Sullivan, CEO of [Xenith](#) and Grant Goulet, Xenith’s vice president of product innovation. Xenith is a Detroit based industry-leader in football helmet technology, as well as shoulder pads, face mask, apparel, and more.

Xenith has prioritized design thinking in all of its product development, resulting in gear that transcends protection alone, designed for optimal fit, feel, comfort, and style. Today, we will discuss how collaboration between designers and engineers can result in groundbreaking innovation. We will also touch on Xenith’s initiative to produce 20,000 face shields for Detroit area hospitals.

Well, thank you Ryan and Grant so much for joining us today.

Ryan: [00:01:13] Excited to be here.

Grant: [00:01:14] Yeah. Pleasure, Olga. Nice to be chatting with you today.

Olga: [00:01:17] Well, it's been such a pleasure to work with your team over the last few years on Detroit Month of Design and other projects. I've always been struck by, in talking to both of you, and hearing from you--just how important design has been to you. You're a fairly young company. Ryan, can you tell us a little bit about Xenith's philosophy around design and why it has brought value to the company?

Ryan: [00:01:40] Sure. I mean, I think for us as a values-based, values-driven organization, we have to start there, and design thinking is very much a part of how we have intentionally designed the framework of our values, and the way that we live them, and communicate them, and celebrate them as a team.

So, "foster a design-thinking mentality" is one of our six core values that we have as an organization. It's important to note that that theme resonates throughout the entire company, right? We believe that design is not something that only that designers do. We do have an incredibly talented design team within Xenith, of course, but it's just as important for folks across our circle of life--that's what we call our team or our organization--that everyone fosters that sense of design thinking and applies it to our entire business. So for us, it gets to the principles and values of who we are as an organization, and how we do the work that we do across the whole company, not just product design.

Olga: [00:02:47] How did you come to that? Why is that one of the first values?

Ryan: [00:02:50] That's a great question. It was something that, when you think about how Xenith has come to be here in Detroit, we were a company that had been founded in Boston back in 2009, and I'll spare you all the details, but the company moved to Detroit in 2015 and we really have built a new leadership team and effectively rebooted the business from 2016 onward. So Grant, myself and our colleagues as leaders at Xenith, had this incredible opportunity to work with an outstanding product and a brand that had a lot of potential. But to do that, we weren't starting from scratch from a business standpoint, and yet we effectively rebuilt the entire team and organization here in Detroit.

So, as we set forth in doing that, we realized, as a group, that we had to be very intentional about, what are the values that we wanted to have within the organization, that we wanted to help guide

and shape everything that we did from our decision making process, to our talent and hiring, to the products that we put out on the field, et cetera.

And it was through that process that we, very intentionally, wanted design to be one of our core principles as an organization. And it really comes from a philosophy of a human-centered approach, and working backwards from ultimately, what our product and our service is intended to do. And in our case, we are seeking to elevate the athlete's pursuit of their game, and we really need to just start with the athlete and work backwards, and the best way to do that is through a human-centered, design-thinking approach. So we were very intentional about that as leaders, as a new team coming together to guide this company into the future.

Grant: [00:04:43] Maybe just to add to the, I think, all great points there--in one piece, as we were going through the refresh that Ryan mentioned, one of the things we really identified as a strong competitive differentiator for us in an industry that's largely driven by engineering, and I certainly don't say that as a slight to engineers. I am myself one, so I fully recognize the value there, but just what a differentiator that could be to really foster that design thinking mindset.

Of course, you know, transcending the physical product itself, as Ryan mentioned, across, you know, everything that we do. And I think we're still kind of learning how best to leverage design thinking across the organization. I mean, one great success we had was bringing on a really strong design director, Matthew McPhail, who's really helped usher in a holistic, you know, design centric approach, cross functionally.

And I mean, this has paid dividends through a number of ways--one of which is, for example, giving a workshop on the critique process. And so, how do you provide and how do you receive valuable critique, as an internal workshop for us? And then, also kind of leading us through a process of really helping to establish our vision, mission, and purpose with a group of emerging leaders at the company. So, just involving them in this process and prototyping together and figuring things out as a group has just been tremendously valuable for us.

Olga: [00:06:05] It speaks to the value of design as more than just these physical objects that we're talking about: It's also about the way that we work. It's interesting, given that your company basically reestablished itself here in Detroit, in a place that's considered a real manufacturing

capital. I think one of the hidden reasons for that has been because of our abundance of industrial and commercial designers. But as you think about Detroit as a place for manufacturing, what have been some of the other benefits that it's brought to Xenith in this kind of second phase of Xenith's growth?

Ryan: [00:06:39] There are several to talk about, I would say, first and foremost is talent. So you mentioned the industrial might or Detroit muscle--many of the things that we like to celebrate here as a community and as a region, but from a talent standpoint, not only does Southeast Michigan have one of the highest concentrations of talented engineers in the country, but we have access to, for example, [College for Creative Studies](#) where we've developed a very strong relationship in recent years, leading a number of sponsored studios, as well as recruiting a number of students for both internships and full-time opportunities to work at Xenith.

We've also have [Wayne State University](#), where almost everyone on our engineering team has some connection to Wayne state, including, whether it's a PhD or a master's degree or some sort of coursework completed at Wayne State. You know, not to leave out our friends across the river in Canada, right? We have a number of team members that live in Canada, or are from Canada. Grant, here, is a Canadian by birth, so that speaks to the global nature of Detroit as a city and as a region, both on the United States side of the river, as well as over in Canada. So, talent is certainly a great benefit to us for the business that we are in. This region has a lot of talents within it that is directly applicable to our business, but it also lends itself well to attracting talent, and we've had a number of folks move here for the opportunity to work on the Xenith team. So talent is certainly one that I would highlight.

Another would be the deep and rich heritage that we have, with the sport of football in the Metro Detroit region. So, here in the City of Detroit, we've established an outstanding relationship with a number of the high school programs through the Detroit Public Schools Community District, also [Detroit PAL](#), one of the largest youth football organizations in the country, and Wayne state, where I had mentioned previously, a number of our engineers have ties to the institution, call that "off the field." But on the field, we've been able to work with Wayne State in terms of prototyping and demo-ing our products before they go to full production. And we've been able to do that with folks at the high school and youth level as well. So, between talent, and the rich and deep

heritage to the sport of football itself, it's a really powerful combination that makes Detroit such a great home for our team and our business.

Olga: [00:09:18] You've been applying some of that talent recently to the emergency needs of our medical community fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. If either of you would like to talk a little bit about, what is Xenith's role in producing face shields, and how has your design and manufacturing know-how really helped contribute to that?

Ryan: [00:09:38] I'm happy to take this one. I mean, it really comes back to that philosophy and one of our values of fostering a design thinking mindset. So the gentlemen that Grant mentioned a moment ago, Matthew McPhail, our Director of Design, sent a text message late one night about a face shield design that he had found online and shared it with me, he was like, "Hey, is this something that we think that we can make?" And that really set forth a work stream where we identified and evaluated: do we make these ourselves or is there a different way and approach that we could do it? Ultimately, we were able to source these on a much better economic basis overseas than we could have achieved here domestically, but certainly it's not all about economics in this case, of course, it's more about speed of response. So we can get these products from overseas faster than we would be able to produce them ourselves, here in the United States, and it was through that passion for design thinking and trying to add value to our community, which we're so proud to be a part of, that this idea was born.

And our team worked really quickly and nimbly to ultimately produce the face shields and get them here to Detroit very quickly, and to the front lines where they are needed. So, it's great to be part of a community where we're seeing a number of institutions, both large and small--companies like General Motors and Ford making ventilators, to organizations like [ISAIC](#) who are knitting and stitching gowns and other things. So, we're really proud to just kind of play our humble role as part of this broader community. And really the spirit of Detroiters all pulling together to do good things in this time of need, for the whole, not only our region--but of course, the whole world.

Olga: [00:11:19] It harkens back to World War II, in a way, when we were the arsenal of democracy, and stopped everything to figure out how to create the machinery that was needed to defend democracy worldwide--and now, in many ways, yeah, I love all the partners that you mentioned,

Ryan, all these companies that weren't making ventilators and medical supplies before--including Xenith--and every bit of spirit of collaboration and of contribution, that is really a part of our Detroit culture. It's just so great to see.

Grant: [00:11:53] Yeah, I think that's a great point. I mean, yes, Detroit is known certainly for manufacturing, but I think an important piece is its innovation in manufacturing, right? And so, how do you actually create the product? I mean, from a design perspective, designing for manufacturing is so critical, right? Really, as critical as the specific solution. I mean, it's one thing to have the ultimate solution to a problem, in the form of a product, sketch, or concept, but you know, if the materials can't be formed in a certain way, or costs simply can't work from a margin standpoint, it's certainly better to learn that early in the process, right?

And I think one thing that we're also finding, too, as we're going through and sort of refining the categories we're already in, or innovating in new product categories, is the strong need for innovation in the manufacturing processes themselves-- and designing new solutions to make things, whether it's more efficiently or more sustainably--and certainly these new processes present different constraints or limitations from a design perspective. For example, design for injection molding, which certainly, there's a strong history of that here--has very different constraints for say, design for additive manufacturing, which is a really exciting area of opportunity. I think it's really exciting to be a part of that new wave of innovation manufacturing outside of just equipment and hard goods here in Detroit, but also, there's such a strong apparel work stream and innovation path here too, which has been great for us.

Olga: [00:13:17] Grant, how has your design and engineering teams...how do they work together and what does that look like? Because I think these points you're bringing up are really relevant, especially with the supply chains being disrupted, and I think, so much uncertainty going forward in the manufacturing space. I've heard some people talking about opportunities to localize manufacturing in the future. How are you thinking about that, and how do you find that your designers and your engineers work together to try to solve some of these challenges you have in your current product portfolio?

Grant: [00:13:50] Yeah, we're certainly getting to a place where I would say these two disciplines do truly strengthen one another. I think there has been sort of some trial and error from a process

standpoint, on how you best sort of leverage those skill sets and bring them together in an efficient way.

And I think, you know, some of our learnings early on, which have led to adaptations in our process, is really moving from a linear approach of this design to engineering, to development--a series of handoffs, which, I'm sure folks listening will know, has a whole host of challenges and inefficiencies built in--and moving more to a process where all of those teams across that design, engineering, and development spectrum, are strongly represented early in the concepting phase. So that we can really quickly get to concept and prototype, both physically and digitally--and efficiently get to a point of understanding: okay, what are our constraints from a manufacturing perspective? What will and will not work? What should we move forward with? And really, kind of narrow down those concepts that we take, into a more robust sort of engineering analysis. And I mean, a big part of this is sort of just team dynamics as well, and making sure that we foster this mutual respect for these sometimes discrepant skill sets that both teams bring. And I think our respective design and engineering leaders have done such a great job at Xenith, really fostering that environment where our designers feel comfortable asking technical questions to the engineers, and providing suggestions. And likewise, the engineers feel comfortable stepping kind of into the design lane, and providing some input and feedback there too. So it's definitely been a process to figure out, and we're by no means perfect there, but I think we have sort of established a nice synergy where these things do co-exist well together.

Ryan: [00:15:39] And Grant, I think one great example that really brings to life how our teams, both design and engineering have worked together is our [Shadow XR Helmet](#), which I think if we were to compare the development time and speed to market for that product, it has to set some sort of record in the industry, not only for quality, but also speed of work. So, maybe if you could just touch on that project specifically, I think it would be a great example to bring those concepts to life that you just shared.

Grant: [00:16:12] Yeah. I mean, it is an interesting example, just from the speed to market and sort of, the pace of innovation, certainly in our industry and no doubt in other industries as well. I mean, if you look at it, we'll take football's specific technology here, because that's what we're in--but I mean, really, you had innovations on the borders of decades, so new products coming in in decades, which would lead to mild improvements in head health and player safety. Then that

started to become a cadence of maybe once every four years to a couple of years, and now, I mean, with Shadow XR that Ryan just mentioned, with a whole new sort of technology platform in there. It was about 10 months from initial concept to being field ready, which is truly remarkable. And it is definitely a testament to making sure that those teams--design, engineering, and, of course, the development side of manufacturing--are tightly connected, and working in synchrony and in harmony, proving out, you know, prototyping as quickly as possible, and making sure that we're moving forward with viable options.

And I think, Olga, you touched on an important point too, which certainly in this current landscape is very relevant, which is, where are we sourcing components from? You know, are we on-shoring certain things, or keeping things off shore? And I think, I mean, certainly it's sort of a diverse portfolios of interests there, but you know, we are looking at ways of picking up that speed to market and rapid iteration through that design process, which makes onshoring and tolerating--to a certain extent, some higher costs, from a dollar perspective--but what that gets you in a speed and agility perspective, quickly offsets some of those increased costs.

Olga: [00:17:53] I know it was kind of the rage, even before the pandemic, to talk about this--and customization and that kind of thing, in terms of consumer products. But, it seems like it's even more relevant now, given how unknown the future is, and how heightened our senses that other things might become disrupted. I think, Grant, this point that you're bringing up around shortening the speed to market, creates an agility to be able to withstand unexpected disruptions in the future.

Grant: [00:18:24] Yeah, for sure. I think another important point there is just how our consumer wants and needs and purchasing behaviors are going to change through this. And I think that highlights the value and the importance of investing early and fairly significantly, in that upfront research. And so, really leading the design process with robust research to understand for our business in particular--what does that athlete want and need to perform on the field? What does the parent look for when purchasing, you know, a helmet or a shoulder pad, or an athletic director or a coach? Our business is interesting in that there are a number of, kind of, stakeholders--and typically the end-user of our products are often not the decision maker for the purchase. And so we've certainly seen large returns on our investment from an upfront, robust and rigorous sort of design-research process.

And I think we've been fortunate to work with some great folks that have really sort of shown us and guided us along this path. And one is our friends, and certainly iconic Detroit brand, [Carhartt](#). Ryan and I, along with our Chief Operating Officer, were fortunate to visit their headquarters. I think that's probably a couple of years ago now, Ryan? [Yeah.]

It was just so eye-opening to get an insight into their process and just--I think the number was something like 30 site visits per year, that their sort of, consumer insights group makes, to farms or job sites--that was just a great learning for us, to really think about that upfront research and how we build that into our process.

Olga: [00:19:57] It really starts to pay off. You know, you can start to see that in your product. I remember when the Xenith Loop, the non-tackle headwear was released, and the marketing for it really struck me, that it was, I can't remember exactly what it said, but it was something along the lines of, "no matter what size head or hairstyle you have." Do products like that come out of this human-centered inclusive process that you've been talking about?

Grant: [00:20:23] Yeah. You know, probably [Xenith Loop](#) is a great example of, likely our first sort of deep foray into this area, and sort of from start to finish, having definitely deep athlete insights be that red thread that ran throughout the process. And I mean, I think to keep a long story sort of short here, it's an interesting product category because for those that aren't familiar with it, we're talking about non-tackle football. And so this is flag football, seven on seven, touch football, and so forth--it's rapidly growing throughout the country. And also of interest is that it's widely played by girls and women, which is a great sort of extension for us as a brand.

I think there were products in this space for a number of years, but decidedly not designed for the sport and certainly not for the athlete. The market leader came out of the medical space, and so one of the things that we did--we're certainly not a "me too" product company--and so we definitely started with a blank slate, and I think, really refused to be constrained by some of the limits of materials or preconceived notions of what these products should look like. And [we] started with a really thorough deep dive with athletes, and certainly parents, to understand what is it that, you know, when you're out there running routes and playing hard, what is it that you

need and want from a protective solution that doesn't inhibit performance, and one that importantly, looks good and that you want to wear?

That's a big challenge for these categories where the head gear, for example, is not mandated. And so through that process, yeah, I mean, we learned sort of the pain points of existing products, and what needs weren't met. And then in parallel, you know, this goes back to sort of that great marrying of design and engineering is running a really robust academic-quality research program on the field. A video-based analysis--to understand the nature, the frequency, and the types of impacts that an athlete actually sustains on the field.

So, one of the key insights that we got by working with our scientific advisory board was that there was no fundamental research on this sport. So we decided, well, we'll go create it ourselves. And so those kinds of parallel tracks of the athlete insights and the engineering, ultimately fueling a proprietary material development--again, with our neighbor at [BASF](#) in Wyandotte here. [It] really culminated in what I like about the product, is [its] apparent simplicity, but just some really great technology and also really driven by those early athlete insights that did talk about those attributes that you mentioned, such as hair management, temperature management, comfort. And certainly, of course, checking the box of necessary protection, which, of course, we're known for as a brand.

Olga: [00:23:09] I see the Xenith brand kind of everywhere, and you have a reputation for being a really community- engaged company. Ryan, is this why you invest in it? Does it really help pay off in terms of the product?

Ryan: [00:23:22] I mean, I think it's a number of things and, yes, the product aspect is certainly important. You know, as Grant mentioned, we did a lot of on-field research, which included some teams here locally in Detroit, as well as others from around the country. But I think it goes much further than that, much beyond that. And getting back to the values conversation that we're having at the beginning. Another one of our values that we talk about often is "passion, purpose, and pride." And for every team member at Xenith, regardless of whether you are designing the next generation of products, or assembling or fulfilling an order for our current generation of products, and everything in between, that is one common value that we all have in common--is bringing that passion, purpose, and pride to all that we do.

And a lot of that is attachment to the community, right? So our products are worn by athletes on the field of play. And we have a very much direct connection, or relation to those athletes that we want to foster collectively as a team.

So whether it's myself, you know, stopping by a high school or a youth football practice on my way home from work or touring athletes through our production facility so that our team members can get exposure to professional athletes, which we've done on a few occasions, to folks on our design team, as Grant mentioned, spending a lot of time in the field doing research, or folks on our sales team, out visiting with communities across the country. We certainly have a lot of strong connections here, in our hometown of Detroit, as I mentioned previously in the conversation, but it's really that community connection that is critically important around the country, and around the world.

One of the exciting and unique things about football as a sport, is the true community nature aspect of the game. So if we think about a Friday Night Lights-type environment of a high school football game, it's not only about the football team that's on the field. Yes, that is the reason to convene, but you're bringing out communities from two different schools, you're bringing out marching bands and cheer teams, and you're bringing out youth football programs and you're celebrating homecoming, and you know, whatever it may be, there's just so much community wrapped around the sport of football itself, that I think to be really authentic to the sport and what we do, it'd be very difficult to do that if we did not have such a connection to the community or a passion for that, as an organization. And it's something that we take a lot of pride in, you know, as I mentioned, and it's great to hear you say that we have that reputation, because that's certainly something that we take very seriously and is part of who we are and what we do. So it's nice to know that people think about that when they think about us here at Xenith.

Olga: [00:26:16] Well, it definitely shows, just in talking with your team and then products--we're going to start to wrap up our conversation, but what's next for Xenith? What are you working on now that you can share with us? I'm excited to peek even more behind the curtain about what's happening in terms of innovation at the company.

Ryan: [00:26:32] We are certainly most known for our football helmet technology and as Grant shared the story of the origin of the Shadow XR Helmet, our most recent introduction in that

space, you know, while that product performs incredibly well, both on the field and in the test lab, we're certainly not viewing that as a finish line by any means.

So, our team is actively working on future developments, you know, one, two, and as far as three years down the road, that are going to continue to propel our company into the future, but importantly, elevate the athlete's pursuit in terms of that product. So our helmet innovation is certainly going to continue.

The sport of non tackle football, which we touched on with Xenith Loop is a really exciting category for us, which we just entered within the last 12 months. That sport is growing tremendously, both here in the United States as well as abroad and it is really exciting, in terms of its inclusivity of both men and women.

So there's certainly a lot of growth opportunities for us to design for male and female athletes, as we go forward. And then I think additionally, we have entered into more of an apparel product lineup also in the last 12 months or so. And really getting back to that design philosophy and taking the athlete insights through all of our research and bringing those to life through some incredible apparel designs that are both style- and performance-driven, is another exciting category for us. So, in short, we are investing in the future. We have an outstanding team that is really design-centric. We're going to keep pushing the envelope of designing for the football athlete for the months and years to come.

Grant: [00:28:11] What I would add to that is, what really motivated me to join Xenith was this wonderful coming together and marriage of science, design and engineering, and I think over the past two to three years, as we have gone through this refresh of the brand, you know, we've built out, as we've touched on, this incredibly talented, truly world class team, and I think we're at a point where we're really making some great investments into each of those areas.

So, doing foundational research studies with world class universities to put out public knowledge about the nature of head health in the sport that we're in, which we feel passionate about. Furthering engineering through innovative material science and technology, and of course, fostering a design-thinking mindset across all of these areas and really making sure that the products that we deliver are truly what that end-user, and sort of their ecosystem--their parent and their coach--are really wanting. Especially as, you know, as we touched on, their need sets or

want sets are likely to change throughout all this. So, yeah, just excited for a number of things in the pipeline that really further our mission of being innovators and leaders, not only in product, but also in thought.

Olga: [00:29:25] Well, I think as we close, I'm excited to see what's coming next from Xenith, and obviously keep up our relationship with your company. But, I'm just curious to know-how this transition to working from home has worked, for such a hands-on company. You're making products every day--you're not a tech company sitting just, you know, "type type type" at computers. Has that caused disruptions? How is your team working? Is this culture of design thinking, has it been an asset as you make this transition?

Ryan: [00:29:57] I think, Olga, in terms of the team as a whole, like everybody out there in the audience, and as we were kind of joking prior to the start of this interview, with our kids running around in the background and making noise and so forth--you know, certainly working from home has presented both challenges and opportunities for our entire organization, and each of us as individuals dealing with different home environments and the like.

So, I think one of the things that we're certainly working hard and striving towards, is maintaining that connectivity amongst the whole team. Maintaining that focus and staying above the line, if you will, fostering a more creative and growth-oriented mindset as a team. Because it's very easy to be on too many zoom calls or have too many distractions or other anxieties in our lives, which have nothing to do with work in many cases. Maybe it's the health of our families or loved ones or the communities around us, you know, this pandemic is really impacting all of us in different ways. So, working to focus, and we talk a lot about not only physical health, so we are eager to get back to producing product and fulfilling it--you know, we're still not open from a production standpoint, as of this recording, for producing product, but we're eager to get back to work there. And you know, we spent a lot of time talking about physical health, but the other area that we've been spending a lot of time talking about as a team, is mental and emotional health. So certainly as leaders, Grant and I, and the other leaders within Xenith, we're really intentional about working with our team to foster a productive working environment, but also acknowledging some of the challenges that come in the working-from-home environment. So I think like most companies, we're learning as we go, but really focusing on our team members and their wellbeing physically, mentally, and emotionally, is something that we take seriously and that we're striving to improve day over day, and week over week.

Grant: [00:31:56] Yeah, I've been constantly impressed by the level of productivity that we've been able to maintain through this. And I think not a day goes by that, certainly the product team, and I'm sure this goes across the organization--we wake up and are tremendously thankful that we get to keep doing what we're doing during this time because that's certainly not the case for a number of folks right now. That's a challenge.

And I think what's really missing, particularly for managers and leaders, is that sort of more organic discussion forum. You know, that inevitably happens when you're walking around the office or the production facility and you see a, you know, whether it's a sketch on an iPad or a CAD model on the screen, and you just kind of strike up a conversation about that.

Whereas in this environment, it really requires a much more intentional and sort of, formal approach to some of those touchpoints, which is fine, it just requires a new way of working. And I think, bringing that design thinking mindset into this environment, so what I mean by that is like, prototyping new ways of working. So what are the types of meetings now that are most productive? How do we limit those, and continue providing some of that heads down time? Are there more efficient meeting schedules, for example, no meetings on certain days, that might sort of increase our productivity? And I think, I mean, we touched on video calls a little bit, but certainly there's unique challenges there.

You know, I'm sure we're going to see some science coming out about the unique ways in which our brain tries to process that 2D information of a 3-dimensional human, and sort of, the additional strain it puts on our computational abilities. It is tiring, and I think especially for those of us like myself, that are maybe more skewed towards the introverted side, that maybe aren't inclined towards the video happy hours and so forth. You do have to find those other ways of connecting and maintaining that communication and that sort of team camaraderie, which is, of course, very important.

Olga: [00:33:52] Ryan and Grant, it has been such a pleasure to talk with you both today and just learn more about how design and design thinking has permeated your company, and why being in Detroit and its kind of manufacturing know-how, I mean just hearing all the references to the other local companies just really reinforces why design and manufacturing and Detroit all go

hand-in-hand, and I really enjoyed talking with you both today. Thank you so much for coming on the podcast.

Ryan: [00:34:20] Absolutely. Thank you for having us and really excited to continue being part of this design community as we go forward.

Grant: [00:34:27] Thanks, Olga. It's been a pleasure.