

The Future of Work podcast is a weekly show where Jacob has in-depth conversations with senior level executives, business leaders, and bestselling authors around the world on the future of work and the future in general. Topics cover everything from AI and automation to the gig economy to big data to the future of learning and everything in between. Each episode explores a new topic and features a special guest.

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Jacob Morgan 00:44

Hello, everyone, welcome to another episode of the future of work. Today my guest is Oisín Hanrahan, the CEO of Angi. Oisín, thank you for joining me.

Oisín Hanrahan 00:54

Great to be here. Thanks so much for having me.

Jacob 00:57

What a lot of people don't know is that before I hit the record button, we were actually practicing my saying your name correctly. So I hope that people can appreciate that I put a lot of effort into this. It's one of the trickier names that I had to pronounce.

Oisín 01:16

I thought you did a good job. Look, I mean, it's a tricky Irish name. I have definitely thought about it. I've thought about like what my parents were thinking at the time. They certainly were not imagining me not living in Ireland, which I think, you know, in hindsight, you know, might have been might have been an oversight. But no, I thought you did a really good job.

Jacob 01:38

You don't have like very strong Irish accent though.

Oisín 01:42

If we drink enough and say enough words, then it'll come out. So if we if we if we pick words that have you in them, like if we say bucket and truck or if we drink enough whiskey, then it will come out. I will, I will reveal myself as someone with a thicker brogue.

Jacob 02:06

My wife and I just started watching Peaky Blinders. So I'm very, very attuned now to all the different accents that are out there.

Oisín 02:14

Can you can you give me your rendition of an Irish accent?

Jacob 02:19

My rendition of an Irish accent or Peaky Blinders? There you go.

Oisin 02:24

Oh, God.

Jacob 02:26

Yeah, it's pretty bad.

Oisin 02:28

That's gonna get cut, isn't it?

Jacob 02:30

No, we're absolutely going to leave this in the podcast. And this is by the way, everyone here is sober. So people who are tuning in, there's been no drinking beforehand. This is just how this show happens to be starting. Well, on that very fun note, why don't you give people a little bit of background information about who you are, where you came from, and how you got to be CEO of Angi

Oisin 02:53

Sure, so I'm, as we've, as we've revealed earlier, I'm from Ireland, from Dublin, I grew up mostly there, I started. First real thing I started was a construction business, a real estate business in Budapest in Hungary. And I bought and renovated and built apartments there for about six years. And that was where I was first exposed to how hard it is for people to manage construction projects and how hard it is for people to manage even getting small things done inside a home or an apartment.

Oisin 03:32

And the other thing I learned to that about that was just how challenging it is for contractors to find the right work with the right people the right time, the right place. And you know, I think that stuck with me. I spent a little bit of time adventure and then I moved to Boston, I did a year of business school and and started to think about that problem of how do people take care of their homes and a co founder Umang and I started Handy with exactly that idea. How do you go from Hey, want to get a handyman to actually have a handyman show up.

Oisin 04:07

And we started handy with that idea. built it for about six years, and scale it out across the country in a couple of categories cleaners and handyman. And then then we sold it to Angi Home Services and Angi owns Angie's List and Homeadvisor at the time. And I took on run product there and more recently I took on the CEO role to to really change what what Angi is trying to become.

Jacob 04:37

And for people who are not familiar with Angie, how big is the company? How many employees do you guys have?

Oisin 04:43

A lot, yeah, in short a lot. So we've we'll start at the top so we have about 30 million service requests a year that come through the platform for about 20 million households across the us, we've got a quarter million service providers on the platform. So those are our pros that show up and do the work. And we got about 5000 people that work directly for Angie as employees. So it's, it's a public company, well over a billion and a half dollars of revenue. And it's, it's really built to, to think about that problem of connecting customers and pros.

Oisin 05:30

And, you know, more recently, we've, you know, focused on mission focused on values and, and really started to bring to life, this idea that it's really hard for people to take care of this most important place in the world for them, which is their home. So you think about where we've all spent so much time over the last year and a half, during this pandemic that, you know, seems never to end. And it's our homes. And I think this, you know, renewed focus on home has, you know, made the the mission of the company ever more important. And it's this idea of how do we help people love where they live? And how do we build Angi into this home for everything home?

Jacob 06:10

How did you actually get into the CEO role, is there a story behind that? Or did you just one day get an email that said, Hey, you want to be the CEO?

Oisin 06:18

It was a text message, yeah.

Jacob 06:22

That would be that would be a great story. If you got a text. Hey, what are you doing nothing. You want to be CEO?

Oisin 06:31

Product doesn't look hard enough, want to be CEO instead? No, look at when we when we originally sold Handy to Angi. You know, there was talk about like, how do we, how do we really think about a larger, a larger role for you within Angi? Like what's the contribution that Handy can make to Angi, and you know, at the time Handy was a small team of 100 folks, and, you know, it was obviously very important in terms of the direction that Angi was going. And, you know, shortly after that, they, they they they asked me to run the product team. And the product or was was really setting setting a lot of the direction for where Angi was going.

Oisin 07:14

So if you think about the Angi, business, traditionally, it was a marketplace was an advertising business where pros would pay to match with, with with homeowners, and more recently, we've we've we've built the services business where homeowners actually pay us to do the work. And now that's, you know, an increasingly an increasingly important part of the business. And that was the part of the business that that I was I was responsible for as a, you know, as part of running product. I was also CEO in handy, which was that part of the business. So as we were thinking about, you know, transition planning and

the direction we were going, you know, it was a it was a dialogue we were constantly having with the with the board and leadership and saying, Okay, well, is this is this the right time. And, you know, at some point, it just became the right thing to do. It was the right direction with the business with the right decision for me, I you know, enjoy the enjoyed my time growing product.

Oisín 08:11

But at the same time, I really do enjoy the, the the broader responsibility that comes with that comes with CEO. And you know, I think a lot of that, a lot of that is about the tone. And it's a lot about culture, it's a lot of vision a lot about direction. And I think those are, you know, really, you know, to me, those are some of the most important things that I can work on.

Jacob 08:37

Was there any part of you that was just thinking like, Oh, shit, I'm not ready for this don't take on the CEO role stay in product.

Oisín 08:45

No exactly zero. I was, look when I was running product that was still CEO in handy. And that part of the business and I was probably enjoying that, you know, equally if not more than I was enjoying the product part. I think products are really important role. I think it's really, you know, it's really a lot in terms of how you set the the strategy, how you set the direction of product led businesses. But I really, you know, I relish the the the opportunity to set the culture to set the values to really think about like, how we're, how we're recruiting people, how we're rewarding them, how we're recognizing them. And I think that that's something that I, you know, I really enjoy, you know, I think it's, yeah, it's something that I really like to get into.

Jacob 09:46

So when the opportunity came up, you just kind of jumped on it.

Oisín 09:49

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I think it was one where it it's one where, you know, I think that there's a lot of there's a lot of ways to explain it, I think one is, I do these weekly, I think it's bi-weekly at this point. So every other week, I do a meet and greet with new team members, where we sit down, we go around the room, and I talk about the mission and talk about where we're going. And one of the things we always cover is like, the the journey that we're going on, and one of the questions that comes up is like, you know, do you like what you're doing? And, you know, I, I like to be very candid and transparent with that with the team, I think it helps me I think it helps them.

Oisín 10:36

And the answer I always give is, not every minute of every day is going to be perfect and gonna make you smile, and that's okay. And, you know, there are some things that I see in my calendar, and I'm like, Oh, I'm really not particularly going to enjoy that, that meeting focused on, you know, a particular, you know, challenge that we've got, whether it's, you know, a regulatory issue, or, you know, a an issue where it's like, oh, like, that seems like a challenge that I'm, I'm not gonna particularly enjoy the conversation. But the vast, vast, vast majority of the days and time that I have, I really look forward to it.

And I want that to be the same for every person on the team, I want every person on the team, you know, we can't promise that you're going to enjoy 100% of your time, but we want to get to a place where you're actually looking forward to the vast majority of the conversations and the vast majority of the work that you're going to do. And I think that's, that's really important.

Oisin 11:35

And I think, you know, when I when I, when I look at my calendar, I look at the time and how I spend it, you know, I really enjoy the vast, vast, vast majority of and I think that's, you know, something that we should all strive for, particularly for our teams. And I think we've got a responsibility as we think about building, as we think about building roles, we think about building structures for our teams and our people to work in, that we, we work to figure out how to create roles and how to create fit between the person and the role and what we need as an organization and what individuals need. And like I said, it doesn't mean that every minute is going to it be a blast, but the vast majority of people's time, we really want to create a world we want to create an organization in place to work where people are like, Yeah, let's do this. And they're looking forward to it. And I think that's, you know, the biggest thing that one of the biggest things that a CEOs responsibility of doing.

Jacob 12:37

So for a lot of employees around the world, though, they actually don't get that right the, I'd say the vast majority of their time they feel more unhappy, or they're not doing work that they want to be doing. So I'm curious to get your thoughts on just kind of the overall state of engagement, and for a lot of employees out there who are just not happy with what they're doing any advice for them or what they should be thinking about.

Oisin 13:01

So I think it breaks down into a few parts, right? I think it's really hard for organizations that are not mission driven, to be successful in the current recruiting environment. So it starts with, you know, do I wake up every day and think to myself, yes, I believe that what I'm doing is broadly good. You know, there's the famous phrase, like, everything's much easier if you got a noble cause. And it's like, yeah, like, is what we're doing broadly good. Are we, you know, tearing down the rain forest? Or are we you know, planting trees and saving the planet? Are we, you know, putting gas? are we are we creating problems for the planet? Or are we are we making it slightly better every single day? And I think that, you know, is a is the first place to start.

Oisin 13:53

The second is, do I feel respected? Do I feel rewarded? Do I feel do I feel like the contribution that I'm making is recognized and you know, there are obviously you know, a whole tract of roles where where the the economics just prohibit that from happening and you know, there are near intractable problems for any one company to solve but solvable for us as a society if we think about things like minimum wage and we think about you know, where the the the the working wage should be, and I think that's like a second you know, the second level it's like, Okay, do I feel rewarded and do i do i do i actually take home enough economics for it to pay for the life that not the life that I you know, dream about but the life that I'm like, Yes, okay, this works for me and my family. I'm not stressed about you know, the breadline.

Oisin 14:51

And then the third layer is the people. So do I find myself surrounded by people who I enjoy spending time with. And that's not the same for every person. So, you know, the hard hitting person who's got, you know, incredible ambitions to, you know, increase their economics, you know, 5-10 x over the next decade and whatever else, they want to be surrounded by people who are going to challenge them every single day and tell them why they're wrong and tell them like how they can get better. The person who, you know, wants a more collegiate and, and, you know, less challenging environment might want something else. So it's like, it really is truly a matter of fit, where not every, not every environment is going to fit every person's ambition. And that's okay. Like, it doesn't have to, it doesn't have to map one to one. And I think it's, it's important that you look at each of those three things separately, you you look at the, you look at the what's the mission of the org, what it's the level of recognition, both economic and emotional, and, like, recognition in terms of praise and, and work done. And then the third is like the the actual people you're surrounded with, and what the the mode mode of communication mode of mode of challenge, what's the mode of engagement.

Oisin 16:23

And I think most of us, you know, screw up on one of those three dimensions. And it's not necessarily wrong, it's just that we don't recognize that all three of those dimensions matter. And they matter. They matter in terms of happiness, engagement, productivity, but it also matters in terms of like, the circular loop of you bring in folks who don't necessarily fit on one of those, one of those, one of the dimensions that you're operating, and suddenly you've got a lot of people and then you, you pull one of those dimensions a little bit the wrong way, or you pull one of them, you know, to accommodate some people you brought in, and now you've got something that doesn't quite match up where you've got, you know, a noble mission, but you've got economics that don't quite work, and you've got a really challenging, hard hitting problem to solve, where you actually have to, you know, operate an incredibly competitive environment, because your competitors are operating that way. But you've built a, you know, incredibly collaborative culture of consensus, and you can't move as an organization, you can't move fast enough, and you kill yourself. So there, you know, you got to think about those three things operating in the paradigm of our the, the ecosystem of like, Who are your competitors and what are you actually going after?

Jacob 16:28

What if you are at a company and you don't like your job? Do you think the best advice for people is to quit?

Oisin 17:53

In the current environment is incredibly favorable to that. You know, you rewind to 2010 or 2009. And I think that advice would fall flat or fall hollow was like, Well, you know, I got to put food on the table, I got to pay my rent, or pay my mortgage on my home, that's deep and negative equity, or I gotta pay my overpriced college debt, or whatever it is, I think in the current environment, there are, you know, unemployment hitting near at, you know, depending category, depending on role all time lows, salary escalations, and near all time highs. I think it's, I think it's, it's definitely an option, but I think it comes down to like, what's the reason is the reason why you're quitting, that you don't believe in the mission of

the organization, or the organization doesn't have one and you're mission driven, then yeah, like, that's an intractable problem. That's a, hey, if you're, you know, employee number 7000, at a company with no mission or company with a mission you don't believe in, it's hard to see how to change that.

Oisin 19:04

If you're leaving, because your economics aren't right, and you don't feel recognized, then, you know, you got to ask, Hey, I might not being recognized because my boss is doing a poor job. But overall, the organization is good at it, then yeah, you should, you should, you know, duke it out a little bit and go see if you can move around if you're leaving, because, you know, the culture doesn't fit. Is it the culture of the team? Or is the culture of the whole, the whole organization that you're, you're challenging? So I think you gotta you got to delve a level deeper into like, the reason for the unhappiness.

Oisin 19:35

We've got, you know, obviously, with 5000 folks in the team, you know, on a regular basis, people come and say, hey, I want to quit, you know, I can think of one particular product manager that came to me, you know, probably a year and a half ago and said, Hey, I'm out, this place sucks. I want to leave. And, you know, I took the time and sat down and spent time with him and you know, what emerged was, hey, he was 100% bought in on the mission, he actually was pretty happy with his economics. And he was pretty happy with the overall culture we were building. But the culture on his particular team sucked. And his manager was given him a hard time. And it turned out, you know, what his manager was doing a poor job managing him. And what we did was we moved in, and we had some difficult conversations with the manager and the manager adjusted and, and the, both the manager and him are still happily at, at at Angi now.

Oisin 20:36

But it was clear that it was clear that there was a miss there, in terms of how the manager was doing. And it was, you know, we would obviously be very disappointed to have lost him at this point. Knowing the great work he'd done before the great work he's done since. So I think it really comes down to like, what's the reason I'm more on which of those levels are you misaligned? On the intractable ones, yeah, you should leave on the ones that are solvable, you should go have a conversation and see if you fix it.

Jacob 21:05

Well, it sounds like the context is also important, like not just identifying somebody that's unhappy or disengaged, but truly trying to understand like, why that's actually the case. Cuz like you said, in your case, it was an employee who was completely bought in, they were happy with pretty much everything, but they just have this one issue with their manager, and you were able to fix it and everything worked out. Whereas oftentimes, I feel like people don't go into that one level deeper to try to understand that, and then they just kind of, you know, make decisions rash decisions before they should.

Oisin 21:32

Oh, you're absolutely right. And it took probably, you know, I don't think that came out in the first conversation with him. It took two conversations to get to that in the first conversation he was just catatonic and this place was, you know, terrible place, and everything was a disaster. And the product was terrible. And, you know, the team was terrible and the mission was terrible, but you know, it's

layers of an onion, right? You peel it back, and like, Okay, well, let's take a breath, let's, you know, walk the block, let's, you know, walk the zoom block. In this case, let's take a moment. And let's really try and unpack it. And it's, it's rare.

Oisin 22:07

Look, you know, there's that there's that famous, famous comparison between, you know, the most stressful things we do. And, you know, it's, it's having kids, it's getting married, it's moving house, it's divorce, it's changing job. And, you know, on some of these dimensions, people get really emotional, understandably, they get really, really emotional. And once they, they, they, you end up wrapped up around the axle on this level of emotion. It's rare, like, very rare, that the first thing that the person says is actually the problem, you know, they come in, and they're like, X is a disaster, or Y is a disaster, my paychecks a disaster, whatever it is, and, you know, you you, you really got to say, all right, well, let's, you know, tell me what's going on, like, tell me like what's going on in your life.

Oisin 22:52

My wife and I, whenever I'm angry, or whenever she's angry, and we're like, on the brink of having an argument, we have a routine that we go through, which is like, hang on, let's just take a breath here for a second. Have you have we both had enough sleep? Have we both like, you know, eaten healthily and had some water, we're not dehydrated? Have we both, like done a little bit of exercise recently, have we like spent time you know, together as humans, like, not in a super stressed environment? Because if not, like maybe like, let's just do those things before we like have this massive argument about whatever the topic of the day is. And I think it's like this, we call it like doing the basics, like, have we done the basics before we're gonna go have this, like, really important conversation? So, you know, obviously, it's harder with someone on your team to try and unpack that in a 30 second, hey, have you done the basics conversation, but, you know, on some level, yeah.

Jacob 23:51

My wife does that with me, too, it's good. It's a good practice, it's like understanding the state that you're in before you, you know, get into an argument or discussion. Because oftentimes, if you're already in a bad mood, then whatever conversation you're going to be in, you're going to be in a bad mood, and you're gonna say something that you probably shouldn't say. So really, and I suppose it's a balance of like, emotional intelligence. And it's also balanced of making sure that you're taking care of yourself before you, you know, go into any of these conflict zones, so to speak. So I think it's a great practice to have, personally and professionally.

Oisin 24:25

Yeah, I mean, I find, you know, with people that you've got reps with, where you're, you know, having the same conversation again, and again, like with your wife, or your partner, or husband, that's easier, right? You're like, hey, like, timeout, have you done the basics? Whereas, you know, new person comes in, who's you know, a seasoned executive who's, you know, had 20 years experience and they're in their first month or quarter with you and they're all hot and bothered about something. It's hard to say, Hey, did you have your breakfast? It's hard to say like, Hey, have you had too much coffee or did you go out for drinks last night, like maybe let's just take a breath here.

Oisin 25:01

But I, you know, I think as you build as you build reps with, you know, your, your team, as you build rapport with the people that work around you, you can start to recognize those things like you start to know them, and I think it gives you, you know, more more ability to ask them hey, like, Is everything okay? And, you know, I think we're all so accustomed to just saying, Yes, at this point, like, Is everything okay? Yes, of course, everything's okay. Like, let's get down to it. You're like, no, like, let's like, you gotta like, find evermore thoughtful ways to back it up and ask people questions about, like, what's going on in their lives?

Oisin 25:38

And, you know, we, at at Angi, we make a practice of, you know, particularly with one on ones or even I think pretty much every meeting I'm in we, you know, we make a practice, not, you know, 1000 person, fireside, but you know, every reasonable meeting, make a practice of trying to, you know, trying to humanize the conversation as much as possible. And it's evermore important in this mode of zoom, where, you know, we've probably met three times or four times in the last year and a half. And, you know, it's the simple, like, how you doing isn't enough? It's like, hey, like, what's going on in your life? How are your kids? How's your family, like, give me give me something, and it starts with, it starts with, you know, the most senior person in the room sharing, and it can be the dumbest thing you got to share. But you share something to get the ball moving.

Jacob 26:33

Yeah, lead by example. I like that. I want to shift gears a little bit, because one of the other things that I found really interesting is that, so you're 37 years old, right?

Oisin 26:44

Yes.

Jacob 26:45

So we're the same age, and you are the CEO of this multi billion dollar brand. And some people might say, Well, you know, isn't 37 a little young to be CEO? Because most CEOs, especially those that I've interviewed on the show, on their 50s, their 60s? So I'm curious to hear your thoughts and perspectives on being, at least for the CEO level relatively young? And how that feels? I mean, have you gotten any people who say, wait a minute, you're the CEO at 37?

Oisin 27:17

I think you're the first person to say it.

Jacob 27:20

Really?

Oisin 27:21

Yeah

Jacob 27:22

I can't believe it.

Oisin 27:23

I think you might be.

Jacob 27:26

Wow. So it's never never come up age of CEOs.

Oisin 27:32

It came up. came up years ago, when I was actually younger, when I was running Handy. And, you know, we were scaling and raising capital, but it frankly, it hasn't come up in. It hasn't come up since I've taken on this. Since I've taken on this role. And you know, I guess that's a maybe it's a function of 37s not young anymore. Am I old? Have I suddenly like is that what's happened here?

Jacob 28:02

No, but it's been really interesting, because I remember there were a couple of articles that were published over the last few years were really shocked at a lot of, for example, Millennials were becoming like CTOs and CIOs, and a lot of really, you know, traditionally younger employees, were getting these senior level leadership roles inside of organizations, where I mean, previously, I mean, when's the last time? You know, prior to the last few years, where you heard of a CEO who's in his 30s, you know, running a company of 1000s of people? Like, it's not a very common thing. So I'm curious, like, from your perspective, do you pay attention to age? Or is it more about experience, things that you've done? Just like your attitude and your approach?

Oisin 28:44

Look, I think the thing that's broken down that age barrier is the rate of people founding companies and scaling them. So, you know, people have found companies, not uncommon for them to, you know, continue to run those companies as they've scaled. And we've seen more and more companies scale, from early founding to, you know, in the 1000s of employees, and in the billions of dollars of value. And I think that's probably one of the things that's the that's, that's, that's normalized it in a way and, you know, you think about what, what startups are all about, it's about taking, you know, what would be normally a 15-20 year journey to scale a large company, or maybe longer, and it's about taking that opportunity and seeing if you can condense it down into a much shorter period of time.

Oisin 29:37

Which means, you know, if it's founders of startups are successful, they take you know, what would be a 20 year journey, and they condense it into, you know, 4, 5, 6, 7 years. So by the end of, you know, five, seven year period, they've got a multi billion dollar business that you know, has created a lot of value, serve a lot of customers and build something incredible and you know.

Oisin 29:59

And I think, you know, in terms of my own in terms of my own journey, I think, I think a lot about like, what's the culture we need to build, so that we bridge, bridge the gap across the different across the

different profiles to make sure that we're getting the right person in every single role. And that, you know, we were recently brought in, we brought in a new CFO who I worked with that was my CFO, at hand and you know, he's got, you know, 20 odd, maybe 25-30 years of experience at this point. And I'm very grateful to have him join the team at the same point, I look at some of the product leaders, I've got that run, you know, really sizable product teams, and they've only got, you know, 10, maybe ish, 10 ish years of experience, but they're, you know, setting product strategy for, you know, hundreds of millions of dollars of revenue.

Oisín 31:03

And I think that's, you know, it's just a function of how do we how do we find the right talent for the right role and empower people put them, put them in the role give them the right guardrails? Obviously, the guardrails are really important. And I think it's, you know, the same. The same for me, obviously, there's guardrails that are put in place to make sure that we're doing the right thing that the board is comfortable with the direction we're taking the organization that we're, you know, that we're we're recruiting people the right way.

Oisín 31:34

Like when I first took on the role, I spent time with each of the board members at Angi, and, you know, I collected a bunch of feedback, and I said a few things I said, like, you know, said, One, I've never been accused of half assing anything in my life, this probably isn't gonna be the first to I, I don't believe in sugarcoating bad news, or, frankly, any news. And I'm going to lay it out pretty straight, like things are going well, I'll let you know, if things are going badly, I'll tell you that they've gone off the rails, and I'll tell you really fast. And the third is, I'm incredibly open to feedback, and it doesn't mean I'm going to agree with you. And if I don't agree with you, I'll tell you, if I do agree with you, I'll also tell you, and they were pretty candid and frank with the feedback and you know, even they did not agree with their feedback. One of them said, Hey, whatever changes you're gonna make, try make them in the first you know, couple of months, like try get get whatever changes you want to make, get them all through as quickly as possible. And someone else that actually, you know, maybe tried stage it and phase a little bit. So what you realize, you know, going through, you know, a conversation like that is there's no right answers to these things, there's more, more importantly, than having the right answer is to have a position and to act consistently, and to be transparent with people that what you're doing and act with authenticity.

Oisín 33:03

And I think that's, you know, probably one of the single biggest pieces of advice I've ever gotten, which is, you know, just don't, don't try to fit in someone else's box, you know, do what you think is right for you, and what's right at the time, and you don't have to be right on everything. But it's far better to far better to take a position that you believe in and act along that and be really transparent and candid with people than to try and to try and conform to someone else's point of view and what you should be doing.

Jacob 33:35

I'm not going to disagree with anything you said, I think that's all great advice. You did touch on something that I think is interesting. And I want to dive a little deeper on that. And that is your, your

leadership journey or how you learned leadership. Because you know, there are some people who think that to be a great leader, you have to go through many years of MBA training programs. I've talked to some CEOs on this podcast who learned to become great leaders just by who they surrounded themselves with, like Chris McCann, the CEO of one 800 flowers, you know, he grew up on, I don't wanna say the streets of New York, but you know, in Queens, New York, and he's surrounded himself by a lot of really smart people who taught him about life and leadership. And that's where he learned those things from. So I'm curious from your, your background, how did you learn about leadership and what it means to be a great leader?

Oisin 34:28

I think it's a combo of things. One is just osmosis and absorbing it from those around you. And I've been fortunate to be surrounded by folks who I've picked up particular things from along the way and watch what they've done. The second is, is the trial and error method, which is really expensive, but real effective, and you put your hand on the stove and get burnt and you're like, I won't do that again. And you put your hand in the refrigerator, and you're like, Oh, that feels good, I'll put it back in there. And I think, you know, been fortunate to have had the opportunity to learn a lot along the way in terms of in terms of how to lead people of, you know, all different stages and all different backgrounds, you know.

Oisin 35:21

It was obviously very different to lead a construction team of 20 odd people in Budapest versus, you know, a team of engineers and in the middle of middle of Flatiron New York and, you know, at a small and a small startup and the other the other the other pieces, is what I would call structured education. So whether that's a coach who's been been fortunate enough to work with a number of coaches along the way, they've done everything from the shadows, Shadow, you watch, collect the feedback to the full 360 with our board and exec team, all the rest. And, you know, I put those three things together, and they're, they're, they're pretty effective, any one of them probably doesn't work by itself, but you know, the, the combo of all three of them and having the opportunity to continue to lead a growing organization.

Oisin 36:18

You know, I've been leading Handy or Angi, now in this space for, you know, going from two people to whatever it is, at this point 5000 people in nine years has, has a lot of bumps along the way, right, that all these things are nonlinear, and you learn the most, at the, the most stressful moments, and the most stressful moments aren't the ones you think are most stressful, it's it, you know, it's the things that catch you by surprise, it's the, you know, you walk in on the day where you're like, oh, my goodness, we're gonna have to, we're gonna have to close the customer service team down and let 100 and something folks go and you've obviously done a ton of prep for that, and you're, you know, emotionally prepared for it, and you've got all your talking points, and you're like, you know, what, you got through it, you're like, that was a brutal day, you go home, you have a glass of wine, or beer or whatever, and you talk to your significant other about it. But you know, that, you know, that's, that's going to be a difficult day, but the ones that are the ones that are, that are the you learn the most from are, are the ones that catch you by surprise, you know, the, the day you walk in, and your you know, your your, you know, someone on your team is had a terrible experience with someone else on your team. And they feel like they've,

you know, not been treated fairly or discriminated against and you're like, wow, this is really come out of the blue like, what, what, how does this come up and it consumes your all hands or you know, becomes a flash button or a flash talking points.

Oisin 37:52

And, you know, I think it's those things that you learn the most from you're like, Oh, we we got blindsided. You know, it's, it's, you walk in and difficult days with difficult topics, and you're like, Alright, we, we know, this is gonna be difficult, we know that this is gonna suck, we know we're gonna have to get through it. And you know, you've done all the prep, and you're largely, you know, it's the Boy Scouts. It's like, you know, if you're prepared, it would be okay. It's where you walk in, and like, somebody hits you over the back of the head with a two by four. And you're like, your immediate reaction is obviously like, what the hell did you hit me over the back of the head for like, and then you're like, Oh, totally justified. Yeah, we screwed up, or we our policy didn't catch that, or we're doing something unfair.

Oisin 37:54

But you gotta you gotta walk that journey, and you got to acknowledge it and figure it out. So I think it's the combo of all three things, but I probably learned the, you know, the one I remember the most or all those moments when you put your hand on the stove, you're like, Damn, really screwed that up. I got a burn from it. I'm glad I probably not going to do that again.

Jacob 38:56

Yeah, reminds me of so I play a lot of chess, I take lessons I play in chess tournaments. And if you were to ask me about all the the various wins, I probably would say, and I don't really remember, like how I won a particular game. But if you asked me how I lost the game, like I vividly remember how I made the mistake and what I learned from it. That is right. I mean, they always seem to be a great chess player, you learn the most from your mistakes, like you cannot be a great chess player unless you lose. And similarly, it sounds like what you're saying is you can't be a great leader. You can't be a great business professional unless you go through those mistakes, those unexpected things. Cuz you once you go through it, like you remember it. And when anything like that comes up again, you make sure that that does not happen.

Oisin 39:38

Oh, yeah, you can you can watch the you know, you can watch the meeting that you were in where like the car crash happened and you like watch the dominoes fall, and you're like, Oh man, I replay that in my mind that I like lost control of that particular conversation in that particular meeting. And you know, you know, you have that happen once and then you see the pattern recognition. The next time someone says something like that you're like, Alright, let's let's, let's Let's take a moment to hear exactly what you're saying was like I defuse the situation. Let's take it, take it to heart.

Oisin 40:07

And, you know, whether you whether you instantly, look, you can't, I think it's hard for every person or every leader to instantly empathize with every single situation, right, because you, you know, you empathize with the things that you recognize. And you know, maybe not every single situation you're

going to recognize and have empathy with on on like, spec, you obviously will like as a human, you'll, you'll go and you'll learn what the person's issue is. And you'll actually go, Oh, I get it now. But I think what's most important is to have the pattern recognition, even if you're not recognizing and finding the empathy on spec immediately with the issue you pattern recognize, and you're like, Oh, I don't understand. I don't understand exactly where you're coming from. But I get that this is important to you. So let me immediately go right to right to right, right to the place where I, I act with integrity and make sure that we're we're appreciating and respecting whatever the issue is, because, you know, everyone's got different topics.

Oisín 40:19

Yeah, the pattern recognition piece is huge. But you also said that you worked or have worked with a with a coach or with coaches. And I'm curious if you can share any more about your experience with that, if you found that to be helpful. Do you think that other leaders maybe mid in their careers or senior in their career where they benefit from working with a coach? And what did you get out of it?

Oisín 41:36

I think it when we're when we're recruiting folks, and you know, no candidate is perfect, right? You're recruiting somebody, and we always say, look, the best they're ever going to present is when they're recruiting, and they really want this job they're interviewing, they really want the job, they're not going to present any better than that. Unless they like change who they are, they change, they change something. So you know, we're always looking for the right, what are the issues? Where are the gaps? And one of the questions we ask is, do we think the person's coachable? So, by coachable we don't mean like, Can we teach them? You know, Java? We mean, like, hey, do we think we can help them recognize this blind spot? And with that blind spot, will they be able to act differently?

Oisín 42:26

So the first question, you know, is, alright, do I think coaching is for everybody? No, because some people aren't coachable. And it's not that they, they're inherently not coachable. They just don't want to be. They've developed a point of view on the world. They're like, you know, what, I'm gonna live my life this way. And I don't want to change how I behave. So the first is, are you coachable? And, you know, do you want to change certain parts, because it's not enough to just have the knowledge, you actually have to change your behavior based on what you'll learn as a result of coaching. So that's step one.

Oisín 43:00

And then step two is like, do you find someone or can you find someone that you respect enough and you've got enough chemistry with and gotten a fit with to trust them enough to give you great feedback? And then the third part is, are you willing to do the work? Because, you know, it's, it's all well, and good to say, Yep, I think I could possibly play tennis. I found a tennis pro that I think could teach me some tennis. And then you're like, I might play tennis once every three months? And you're like, well, you're probably gonna suck. So I think you put those three things together. Yeah, absolutely. I, I think it's hugely beneficial. I'm very fortunate to have had some great coaches that I've worked with, very fortunate to work with organizations that have supported that. And, you know, in some places, in some cases, pushed me to embrace, embrace coaching and be like, hey, you might, you might need a coach right now. You got a big blind spot here. You're, you're dealing with x.

Oisin 44:02

And I, you know, I think probably probably not enough people lean into coaching. And I think the more we've we've, you know, we've had had many folks that Angie that we've helped with, with coaches over the years. And generally where we've had success is where we've had very specific things that were like, hey, help this person with this, generally help a person with like, being a better x No, help a person with x. So we had somebody who was an excellent, excellent at helping some of our partners excellent at helping some of our partners solve their problems, but very poor at making sure that we got the right economics out of a particular a killer deal. And we brought in coach to say, Hey, could you make sure that we work with this person on in every situation, making sure that that they are balancing in their mind our needs, and there's our needs and the needs of the partner.

Oisin 45:16

We had another person, the technical leader who just needed help on presenting to non technical people, we had another person who needed help on how to package upwards as opposed to coming into a one on one with a list of like, here, the 50 things I'm doing. And in every case where we have specific things near every case, where we have specific things, we've, we've been successful working with coaches, I'd say our hit rate when we say, hey, generally helped this person be a better manager like 20% success rate.

Jacob 45:49

Wow. Yeah. So I think the importance that you highlighted there is if you're working with a coach, it's great to do so. But it needs to be around something specific that you want to improve or get better at. So I think that's great advice. Speaking of advice, I came across an article on Forbes, I think it was fairly recent. But you share the three pieces of advice that you got, and I thought this would be a great way for us to wrap up on it just wanted to read these three things that that were written in this Forbes article. And you said, the three best pieces of advice you got are number one, be honest with yourself about why you want the job. Number two is write down things that you believe are true that the rest of the world hasn't figured out. And number three is, you'll be tempted to move at a slower pace, because you'll think you have to take more things into account. But don't, you must change and execute at the same rate as before, especially within your first 90 days as CEO. So wanted to get your your thoughts on these three pieces of advice. And if this is something that can be applicable to everybody, regardless of their position inside of an organization.

Oisin 46:57

I think the biggest one is writing down what you believe to be true--hearing them played back, I think you have this, you have this belief on most situations, and you may or may not be right. And that's okay. But the more you can be honest with yourself on what your belief is, whether it's, hey, we should do x or, you know, one of our earliest beliefs, when we started handy was that people would buy a home services online. And we wrote that down, we said, Hey, like we're going to either build a great company doing this, or we're going to disprove it, and we'll pivot and go do something else. But we're not going to consider anything else until we have like proven or disproven this, this fact. And you know, nearly a decade later, I think we're safe to say, you know what, people are gonna book home services online, they're gonna pull out their visa, Amex, they're gonna type it in, they're gonna buy services

online, which again, nearly a decade ago seemed like a far fetched idea, which now seems pretty, like, blindingly obvious, and perhaps a little bit inane.

Oisin 47:59

But in most situations, you have a point of view. And I think it takes a certain level of bravery, and clarity of thought to actually commit it to paper. And most people I think, don't commit their opinions, thoughts, and reasons to paper. And once you do, it's, it's weirdly refreshing in a way, it's like, you know, what, alright, I've written it down. It's not as scary now that I've written it down. My whole life is not tied up in this belief. It's okay, if I'm wrong. And what I need to do is be very objective and committed to figuring out if I'm right or wrong. And I think that's, I think that's refreshing.

Oisin 48:44

I think the pace one is, is is is interesting, right? The the idea of what pace you should operate at and, you know, in some cases, I think the framing for that one was, Hey, if you're coming from a startup into a larger role, like the reason you're doing it is to create the pace I think there's a question you know, whether that's universally applicable to everyone or whether it's some case you should be increasing pace in other cases, maybe it's time to you know, take it down to half a point but and then the most important is to figure out what you believe to be true because you know, that it's it's it's kind of magical, I don't know there's something very special about writing things down like whether it's you know, this or whether it's the the concept of gratitude journal or just journaling in general, I just find it so like cathartic and like helpful to actually write things down and it's weird I don't get the same I don't get the same thing from typing right I don't get the same I find typing to be helpful as in it's in terms of like, keeping the thoughts in my head is like the worst of all outcomes. You know, the next best is you know, record audio recording them into into the the iPhone, the next best is typing them. And the gold standard is like actually taking out the, the paper and you know, actually scribbling them down.

Oisin 48:51

I do that when I work on like, book ideas or projects or I'm trying to map things out or come up with a visual, I always have a notepad and an a pen with me because it's, I don't know, you're right. It's um, I feel like when I'm writing things down or drawing them out, I I'm, like, more clear than when I'm just sitting there like this, like my brain is more engaged and involved in the process. It's weird, but it's totally true.

Oisin 50:24

Yeah, I think the the, the summary of that one is the worst place of all for your thoughts is in your head.

Oisin 50:30

Yeah.

Oisin 50:32

Go to another other format, any other format is better than your head.

Jacob 50:39

My wife and I interviewed David Allen, who's the author of getting things done for our entrepreneurship podcast and he he very much echoed that like, your mind is a terrible calendar. It's a terrible organizer. get things out of your head as soon as you can. So couldn't agree more.

Oisin 50:54

Yeah, it's Oh, it also just clutters up everything else right? Your thoughts in there like that? You think you're you think you put them in a box. Actually, you just left them on the floor. And now you got like a million more, a million pages of the floor of your mind

Jacob 51:08

Yeah, no, it becomes a disaster. I agree. Well, I know we are out of time. And I didn't even get to honestly like if you look at my notes here, I still have like 20 other things I wanted to go over. But where can people go to learn more about you and Angi anything that you want to mention for people to check out. Please feel free to do so.

Oisin 51:29

Yeah, you just find me on Twitter. Oisin Hanrahan on Twitter.

Jacob 51:33

That's it. Oh, and maybe you can spell your first name because people are gonna be confused.

Oisin 51:37

Oh, sure. It's O-I-S-I-N and H-A-N-R-A-H-A-N

Jacob 51:44

Perfect. Well, thank you so much for taking time out of your day to share your insights. I hope people get a chance to follow you on Twitter and get more of your insights on there.

Oisin 51:54

Thank you so much. Great to talk to you.

Jacob 51:57

Likewise, and thanks, everyone for tuning in. I will see you next week.