

## Will Ciolino of Anthology Corp

[00:00:04] This is the Investor Connect podcast program. I'm Hall Martin. I'm the host of the show in which we interview angel investors, venture capital, family offices, private equity, many other investors for early stage and growth companies. I hope you enjoy this episode.

[00:00:23] Hello, this is Hall Martin with Investor Connect today here with Will Ciolino, founder and CEO of Anthology Corporation, anthology's a brand new portfolio management system that provides powerful organization for all of your photos. Anthology provides a fully customizable profile UI, which allows artists to extend their creativity beyond just their photos and maximizers, given real estate on small devices to bring the viewer's focus on the photos, keyword tagging allows users to easily find new profiles photos in portfolios. Additionally, Anthology introduces beginners and hobbyists to consumers looking to purchase physical prints. Also allows artists to set their own royalty rates, terms and conditions for licensing businesses pay less for stock photos, while artists keep more of the revenue. This gives professionals, the amateurs, the ability to sell and market their skills to consumers seeking private or even photo shoots.

[00:01:11] We'll thank you for joining us. Hey, how are you? I'm going to be talking to you to.

[00:01:16] Great. So what was your background before founding anthology? What did you do before this?

[00:01:22] Yeah, before I took the plunge into the rabbit hole, that is entrepreneurship. I was an engineer, so I graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering a few years ago. I've always been an artist, always been creative. And it was a great field really to get into that as well. I started working in a small on a small team at a pharmaceutical consulting lab. Really? That's where I guess I just started learning the ropes and how to become a solver. And when you're faced with a problem. Right. And I took those, you know, those talents over to a manufacturing plant where we were trying to move multi-million dollar pieces of equipment from one facility over to another. You can imagine the the stress that for a business owner, if you're trying to make this move and this piece of equipment didn't fit at the end of the day, how how stressful that must be. So we had to make sure that that was going to work out in their favor. And then

most recently, I worked for a Fortune 500 pharmaceutical company in their 3D technologies department. So there I was. I was able to work on over a thousand unique projects, doing customized solutions for various different problems across the world. And it was such a rewarding experience because we were working in a relatively small team. So really, we were just like a jack of all trades of sorts. We really did full scale operations, everything from design and engineering to to prototyping to the fabrication and post-production and even the shipping and customer relations side of it. It was a tremendous experience from that regard and prepared me well for what I'm doing now.

[00:02:55] So what led you to start work in the photo portfolio space?

[00:02:59] So for me, I've been an artist and a creative for about nine to ten years now, give or take started pretty small and I would just find like pictures and drawings online and try to replicate them. And then I found photography and I really took a liking to it. And I, I kept with it for years. And I still to this day, I'm a hobbyist photographer. And. I guess to me, what I was. Able to do with this piece was there was I was always looking for a solution, for a problem in a hobby of mine, I knew I wanted to be an entrepreneur of some sort. And, you know, as I got older and that that really took hold around the time when I graduated high school. So I knew I wanted to work for myself someday. And it just came upon me that I want to make one one day when I was just thinking on some of my hobbies, what what is it in the photography space that I could really have an impact on? And I think there was a huge opportunity to design a brand new photography platform that really caters to everybody needs. There was there was a whacking in the in the complimentary side of the side of the industry. Right. Everything is very basic and I guess lackluster in terms of design. And it doesn't really compliment the art well in forms of media that we have today.

[00:04:20] So what's your advice for people investing in this space? What do you tell them to do before they invest their money?

[00:04:27] So before investing in the digital or social media space? I try to tell people like don't gloss over the photography market, especially so because I hear a lot of times and I get the sense after having some meetings with individuals that we tend to think that. This market is too saturated or that the wealth of ideas is run dry, and that couldn't be further from the truth. The

technology's always improving. There's always new artists coming, coming to the forefront. There's always new content is new by reality, left and right all over the place. And even from just the digital space and a digital market, there's no standards coming into play in terms of how photography is being shared. So this opens the door for a ton of new innovation, more platforms, better access just all around it. There's a photography industry is not a sleeper cell, so to speak.

[00:05:23] Great. And so tell us more about the sector itself. How do you see the industry evolving?

[00:05:30] Yeah, so I kind of touched on this a little bit, but kind of segmented out from from my perspective. There are always new technologies coming out. We always have new camera equipment. There's always better imaging centers. Sony just recently announced their new Alpha1 camera. Nikon, I believe this week announced a new line of cameras online, even from the mobile photography industry. Right. Look at things like Google Pixel and what what Samsung's been doing for years. There's leaks about the new iPhone 13 coming in the fall with upgraded camera equipment. So there's a ton of new innovation in that space and everybody's always getting better and better, which is which is really exciting on the editing side. Right. You have Adobe and what they're doing with Photoshop, Lightroom and all their suite of products that is always improving and always getting better on an individual level. I mentioned that everybody's an artist now. With the advent of these smartphones in our pockets, everybody becomes a photographer. Everybody has access to really high powered cameras, which just creates perspectives all over the place and makes the world better, makes the document documenting the world just that much better than it was yesterday. But where I think I've seen in the experience that I've had so far, where I've seen actually a regression is in distribution market. Photographers have felt taken advantage of for some time. Now, if you think about it, the platforms that we're using, the very empires that they built today were on the backs of us as content creators. And lately they've been turning their heads in the direction of influencer culture and brand marketing. And from a business perspective, I can't necessarily blame them because it's a huge market. There's a lot of money in it. But as an artist, it makes you feel wronged and it makes you feel like there's a lack of acknowledgement and appreciation for what you've helped to build. So I think there's a huge opportunity in this space to promote itself and the artist behind that.

[00:07:30] So what's the growth rate of this sector? How fast is it moving forward?

[00:07:34] So what's nice about the photography industry is, is typically we see expected growth and we've come to know that it's measured because it's such a mature industry. It's been around for a while. But with that said, obviously there's the big elephant in the room that's covid-19 and the pandemic. So I'll throw that out there, then that might surprise you, but 95 percent of the professional market are freelancers in some capacity. And when you think about it, freelancer photography was absolutely decimated with a pandemic. Weddings went away. People stopped taking up, having birthday parties. People were scared to go out, rightfully so. And businesses stop having private events. There was a lack of a need for freelance photography and for some time. And to this day, it's weakened. It's getting better with the with the rise of vaccinations and, you know, the opening of public spaces again. And I think from my perspective, I would say that for the coming months and maybe even a year or so, we'll still see that slow, steady growth back to where it was prickley levels, which is exciting and also provides an opportunity for the companies that are coming along to to grow with that freelancer market alongside of them.

[00:08:48] And so how many companies are engaged in this sector?

[00:08:51] So the mobile platform industry is always getting bigger. There's always new viral platforms coming out. Has just released a few weeks ago, kind of overnight and seemingly out of nowhere. And obviously, we have the big social media platforms that everybody can name. But there are a ton of others out there that are our smaller companies, but well-known within the industry who have millions of users under their belt. So the photography market specifically, there are a few other coming out and small startups that are trying to try to capture different sectors in the market, which is encouraging. But as an artist, what if I put my photographer lens on and I'm just looking for a new platform to use for myself? A lot of times what I tend to see is that these companies tend to mimic a lot of their feature sets based on the bigger platforms out there. And just to me, like I said, as an artist, that's a red flag. It seems to it seems to show that they don't understand that there's a hunger for something new, for something better, for a platform that fits our needs and fits with what we want to use. And so it's unfortunate to see some of that happening. But there are a ton of companies out there and are a bunch of them.

[00:10:03] Great. And so you talked about covid being a challenge in the space. But aside from that, what are the other challenges that you face in this market from an industry perspective?

[00:10:13] I would say for me personally, the biggest challenge is always the constant fear of being drowned out by those larger corporations. They got a ton of working capital that they can use it at their disposal whenever they want. But obviously that is a measured fear and some in some capacity. Right? Every industry, there's always bigger players and and we always see newcomers come along and succeed pretty well. From a social perspective, I would say the challenge is that we're facing with social media companies is mainly around how do we maintain integrity and maintain customer relations and trust. Lately, people have known and come to know about what business practices are some of these companies in terms of their personal data and how they sell it for advertisement revenue. And obviously that people are mad about that. They're they're upset about that and rightfully so. So I think as a young social media company, we have a great opportunity to build our business using a model that doesn't require leveraging that customer data. Some of these larger companies, they've built massive overhead and with the expectations that that advertising revenue is going to be there. So you see them putting a lot of pressure to keep these practices in place. But I think there's a there's a there's a real push to change that.

[00:11:28] So how does that fit into this overall landscape?

[00:11:32] So I tell you, we're building a premium environment where distributive workflows and revenue streams happen all in one space. So what that means is, is you'll be able to have access to new ways of earning income as an artist, you'll be able to create efficiency in your workflows and just have a platform at your disposal that that complements and acknowledges your talents as a creative great.

[00:11:54] And can you tell me what what the plans are for it?

[00:11:57] Yes. So we recently just launched our MVP at the end of January that allows our artists to start. Building their personal and professional portfolios, so you'll be able to start putting content onto the platform now in the next two weeks or so, we're going to be releasing

some new feature sets, including search and the ability for public facing profile. So you'll be able to find your friends and and see what other artists are building and what portfolios they've built so far. Towards the end of March, we're building prerevolutionary feature for the photography industry that that right now I'm kind of hesitant to talk about just a little bit like in these days. But but that is coming towards the end of March. And we have a set of feature sets that will be coming out in the summertime as well around our location data bases, a marketplace based on block chain technology and a ton of other exciting, really cool features that that I'm happy to keep promoting.

[00:12:54] Great. And what's your future vision for Anthology? Where do you hope to end up with it?

[00:12:59] I hope at the end of the anthology will become a massive platform that allows artists to make as much money as possible in their fields. Whether you're a professional and you work with brands regularly or do commission based work or license work, or you're just a hobbyist and a beginner and you're and you're trying to test out new revenue streams, maybe you're trying, selling, selling one of your photos for the first time, or you're trying to sell a license photo for the first time, I hope. And I believe that anthology will become the place where people turn to for those types of workflows. And then obviously, I think I believe we'll be expanding to other countries in the next few years and and start helping photographers internationally as well as well as other markets, too. Right. There's other creatives that this type of technology can complement. If you think of fine artists and painters and anybody else who really maintains portfolios in whatever capacity when the last few months that we have here, what else should we cover that we haven't? I would just say that I hope that people continue to look for new platforms, continue to push social media for changing and to keep driving and becoming better artists. If you are an artist out there, know that there are technologies coming out down the pipeline that that are being built for you and you just continue. Pushing forward and taking photographs.

[00:14:21] Great. How best for listeners get back in touch with you.

[00:14:25] Yeah. So anyone who wants to connect with me, I'm available across pretty much all the social media platforms where you could email me at William Chileno at Anthology, Bash US

dot com. You can visit the website anthology, dash us dot com or go and sign up and build your first portfolio where you can download the IRS mobile application as well. If you just search for anthology, it'll be at the top or near the top of the list. All right.

[00:14:54] Well, thank you for joining us today and hope to have you back for a follow up soon. Great. Thank you so much. I appreciate it.

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