

Daran Herrman of Goboto.com & Establishing Your Empire Podcast

Speaker1: [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, and many other investors for early stage and growth companies. I hope you enjoy this episode. The Investor Connect is a 501 C three nonprofit dedicated to the education of investors and startups for fund raising. Please consider donating \$100 to the program to help others in their investor and entrepreneur journey. You can find the donate button on the Investor Connect org website. Well, hello, this is Hall Martin with Investor Connect. Today we're here with Daran Herrman, CEO at Gboko and the host of Establishing Your Empire podcast. Gobodo is a full service marketing company, and Establishing Your Empire is a film podcast that inspires entrepreneurs, creatives and future business owners to pursue their passions, grow their organizations, and build their empire. Daran , thank you for having me on your show and thank you for joining us today.

Speaker2: [00:01:02] Thank you for such a wonderful intro as well.

Speaker1: [00:01:04] Great. So where are you calling from today?

Speaker2: [00:01:07] I'm here in Lovely Austin, Texas. It's February and it's 80 degrees outside.

Speaker1: [00:01:13] That's great. We'll wait till tomorrow. We'll see what it is then. In Texas, if you don't like the weather, just wait 5 minutes. It'll be different. So it's always something blowing through. But it's nice right now for sure. So it seems like we're getting back to in-person events and our favorite here in Austin is South by Southwest. It's coming back in person this year. I assume you work with South by Southwest as well.

Speaker2: [00:01:39] So I actually was a photographer for South by for five years straight. I haven't done it for quite a few years now, but I absolutely love the energy that comes with South by it. It was one of the reasons why I moved to Austin. And it's it's terrible. It's exciting, it's fantastic. It's horrible. It's all the things because there's so much it's it's like life to the extreme with the creatives of the world.

Speaker1: [00:02:07] Well, that's great. I remember I actually moved to Austin in 1986 or 84 and then in 86, South by Southwest kicked off with this film and music festival, and it was mostly a bunch of bars on Sixth Street that let you come in and listen to some music. And I remember in 87, everybody complaining because the tickets went from \$6 to \$12 and pour for the entire festival. And then about 20 years ago they added the conference onto it. And then I think it really took off after that as a professional conference and really gained international notoriety for the scope and what it did as well. So it's come a long way. It's just like Austin's come a long ways.

Speaker2: [00:02:50] Yeah, you have to. Just like the Austin real estate market. You have to add a couple of zeros to it at the end.

Speaker1: [00:02:56] Absolutely. Well, and same thing with the Austin startup scene. My background is I started my company in 2009 after I retired from my day job of 24 years with and I and at that time the Austin started seeing had two accelerators one at the university and then one downtown and then, you know, there was one or two co-working spaces. I was there for watching the co-working scene come up from what it wasn't to what it is today. And now there's an accelerator on every corner and every every other corner has a co-working space on it. So it certainly has jumped up quite a bit in the prominence of what it's doing there. How how have you seen it so far?

Speaker2: [00:03:39] So one of the things that always drew me to Austin and what's kept me here is the tech scene. There's a lot of people that are programmers or wanting to be involved in tech scene, wanting to grow companies. They want to get involved in things. And so what I've seen is just more and more of that type of person, which I'm that person to like. I moved here in 2008, so I've been here a little longer than most. But then in a day, it's what drew me to Austin is there was such a love for tech, but also love for music and and the arts. So with that merger, it almost just makes sense that there's explosion because there's more and more people coming for those reasons.

Speaker1: [00:04:18] Absolutely. And we had a lot of for a while there. We were the outpost for sales and support Facebook, eBay, Google, others used awesome for that for many years where

they've come because there's plenty of millennials, plenty of tech people here signing up for that. And it seems like now we're at the 2020 range, we're now moving to that next level where we're actually funding our own startups. We've been funding startups for a long time, but not certainly at the level we have in the last two years. And so now we're the central place, the headquarters for those companies. And as opposed to being the ancillary support force for the Bay Area companies that we used to have all the time. So it seems like there's a real transition from Web two to Web three, from the old economy to the post-COVID economy. How have you seen it shape up so far?

Speaker2: [00:05:08] Well, I see that not just in the startup space, but let's take like Hollywood, for example. They no longer have the full hold on the film industry. Now we've got Atlanta, we got here in Austin, we got Louisiana's, got a ton of it. So we're seeing it in a lot of different areas where it just can be spread out. And I think the Internet's got a big piece of that is it's a great equalizer. We all can now get on there and learn things. We don't have to go to one specific school or one specific place to meet people, and I think it's going to be even broader than that. I think we're going to see some cities that don't even have much right now will get a foothold because maybe the rent is cheaper or whatever it might be. But to me, the Internet has really shifted from a physical location to anywhere, anywhere. Make sense.

Speaker1: [00:05:53] What used to be cities try to compete on competency. Like you mentioned, LA was for movies and media areas for tech and those things. And then Austin always carved out specific niches inside the tech space for itself. It was very strong in enterprise software back in the nineties and 2000. Dell Computer came out of that that time frame. But today it's very strong. And blockchain, which is kind of a successor to the enterprise software next generation technology, so to speak, you think these cities will continue to carve out specific niches, or do you think that's just going to go away because it's all online and it's not going to be part of a metaverse or some other format?

Speaker2: [00:06:32] Yeah, I think that we always like to niche up because we like to get around people that are similar and interests. And we were talking about like how Austin I think there's, there is a very strong younger community here at Austin. So it just makes sense that they're embracing the nfts and they embrace the cryptocurrencies. And now as part of that, I was going to a lot of those meetups when it first Bitcoin got really big and and I think that that will always

happen to some extent. But what's, what will happen is it won't I don't, I don't think it'll ever be like 99% of that industry is in one spot. It's always it's going to be all over the place.

Speaker1: [00:07:07] Great. Well, you've worked with a lot of startup scenes and seeing Austin grow up. What's the most important lesson you've learned in this area?

Speaker2: [00:07:14] Oh, the most important lesson. You know, I don't know if this is most important, but the one that comes to mind that I I'm slightly surprised at is the importance of storytelling. So what we've found is with the when tech gets greater and greater, there's more ways to touch people and there's more ways to get out your get your message out there. But to do it in a interesting and impactful way is is more and more it's easier to do now that we have photos and videos and we do all these things. And I always kind of thought of it as like a want to have. And the more I get around more and more companies is if you cannot tell your story and this, like I said, interesting, impactful way, it's just not going to resonate with people. And that's not only to get your startup funded. I'm also talking about interacting with customers and growing your company. You're selling it online to get customers and keep customers kind of everywhere down the line. And for me, I've always loved a camera, so that gave me an unfair advantage to do videos before people were doing it. But, you know, if you're good at copywriting, that's great blogging. There's a million different ways. Audio. This is a great way of storytelling as well.

Speaker1: [00:08:26] Great. Has you seen the ecosystem grow in Austin? What's one thing you didn't expect to see that you did see.

Speaker2: [00:08:35] Here in Austin specifically? You know what I think what I've. I think that's an interesting question because really the growth was what was what I didn't expect to see. I love the city and it just had an explosion of growth. But what what what I have noticed in kind of in my space, because I do a lot of online e-commerce and online selling online is that anybody can really do it, especially today with tools like Shopify, it's so much easier. And then also online is very similar offline. Like if you take your your offline world, you know, let's say you had a brick and mortar store, you're going to like make your showcases in a certain way. So people go through your store in a certain way and you do the same with online. And I just have

seen an explosion of people here in Austin, but also all over the place running, starting their own company, selling online and doing it well.

Speaker1: [00:09:32] Yeah. So what's the common myth about selling online in your field of expertise there? What myth are you often dispelling out there?

Speaker2: [00:09:40] Well, that it's easy. You know, I. I talk about how, like, motivational it can be to do it, but there is a million steps. And what people typically do is they focus so much on the systems and the marketing and all that, and that's super important. So don't get me wrong there. But the customer is, number one, the. Developing a kind of consistent process that they expect. And putting the customer first is something that I think a lot of people miss at.

Speaker1: [00:10:12] Great. And how do how do people do that? What's the key secret there to make sure that gets done well?

Speaker2: [00:10:19] Well, I think the best way is you kind of humanize your brand and you do that through communities, transparency, shared values. You do it by storytelling. Like I said before, mission driven like and I'm not just saying, like where you donate to a cause. I'm saying, like, if I'm selling microphones, I'm really into microphones all about it, into podcasts. It'd be all in that full ecosystem. And then creating this consistent customer experience, whether it's we've seen Apple with the packaging just being perfect and their stores always having this very consistent user experience that that people become accustomed to. And it doesn't have to be a high end experience. It just has to be very consistent so that their expectations match reality.

Speaker1: [00:11:03] Great. Well, I always ask this question. What online information source do you find most helpful in your work? I find this is a great way to discover new sites and information sources out there. What do you find helpful?

Speaker2: [00:11:15] Youtube. I'm not even going to be even new. I love YouTube. I taught myself photography with YouTube. I teach myself everything I know. That's probably the common answer, but I just, you know, it's a really game changer of not only being able to do something, but having the confidence to try and, you know, even fix stuff around the house. I'll throw up YouTube and figure it out. And just because I read I see one, it's not like I'm going to

take that as the truth. I'm going to take like 15 videos, you know, even parenting your child, you kind of like see a couple of different perspectives. And so I use YouTube all the time and it really has been probably to me more important and learning than college.

Speaker1: [00:11:55] And so how do you see it progressing over time? You see it just more videos or are they more in depth or are they more expert oriented? Where do you see it growing?

Speaker2: [00:12:06] Well, I see YouTube as having a tough time moving ahead because I think people are going to want to probably be niched up a little bit in some areas. And we're already seeing this. You know, you have Skillshare and all these different sites that, you know, is going to be this quality of content. Every time there's a lot of time wasted on YouTube, you're going to watch some videos that don't make sense. They take too long to get to the point. So I think that YouTube will just continue to grow because it's the giant that they are and they have. It's going to be your one stop shop and then you'll have opportunities for other companies to come in and be a really niche environment to do what you expect. An example that I've just said something like Raise your child, like we would buy a subscription to a I can't remember the company, but a service that was just basically on, you know, infants, right? And they're going to be done by an actual doctor and done in this way and kind of perfectly done with the outline, which you wouldn't get with YouTube.

Speaker1: [00:13:02] Great. So what you think is the next next thing after you? Ta We're seeing a lot of shift from the Web two world to the Web three world and that's mostly driven by blockchain, nfts, metaverse and those type of things. Do you think there's a follow on to YouTube that will be the next generation? What would that look like?

Speaker2: [00:13:18] Well, I'm not sure. I think we're going to look at the next operating system. Right. You know, you and I come from some days where we learned on DOS, or at least I did, and I'm sure you did, too. And then Windows 3.1 and 95 and all this. And I think we're going to see a big shift in how we interact with technology. Phone is fantastic, but it's slow. You know, you're only using your thumbs to actually interact with it. And of course, we have video and stuff, but I think it's going to be a more immersive experience. My concern is it has to be better than the phone, right? So when we get there, I think we're kind of a ways out. But I would love

to pay for a cooking course with a chef and act like I'm almost there and so he can interact with me, too. Right. So let's say that I'm cooking in and he's teaching me something I would love for him to say, okay, like and we could do this, of course, with Zoom. But it's really tough, right? I think that just that immersion together is going to get more and more powerful.

Speaker1: [00:14:16] Great. Well, the next question I always ask people and always get interesting answers to this. If you could start a business tomorrow, what would that business be if it's new and different?

Speaker2: [00:14:25] Yeah, I think there's a couple spaces that are really ripe for disruption and real estate is definitely one of them, and that's something that I'm looking into right now. I also think the travel industry, as in buying and selling or buying your tickets is in the same way since 2000. I think with real estate, the the fee structure doesn't make sense. 6% for \$1,000,000 house that sells itself most of the time, just not quite there. And has it changed? And we're seeing a couple eye buyers in the space. And what they do is they like Zillow. What Zillow got out of it, but a couple different ones where they actually come in and purchase homes without you having to list it. But I don't think that's I think that's like one little small piece of it. I think there's really needs to be an optimization of every stage of the real estate buying and selling experience.

Speaker1: [00:15:14] Right. We're seeing the implementation of Nfts Non-Fungible tokens for real estate and other things as well. You think that's the answer for providing additional incentives and alternative payment technologies?

Speaker2: [00:15:28] I think it covers one piece of it. What's great when I think of Nfts, I'm like, Well, this is a wonderful way to do. You know, you can have your contract be part of NFT, you can own real estate or a part of company as Nfts, but I think that's only maybe on the actual I have the funds or I'm using a company to get the funds, but there's still all the different steps in between of finding the house that you want, you know, making an offer, negotiating and all these other spaces. So I think tech as in large tech like Nfts, a complete shift will help some of that, but probably not enough.

Speaker1: [00:16:07] Plenty more to invent here. We kicking off this decade with a bang covid and then all the things going on with metaverse nfts blockchain web3 defi. There's so many things happening and so many more that's going to happen as well. It's going to be exciting to see how it turns out.

So in the last minute that we have here, how best for listeners to get back in touch with you.

Speaker2: [00:16:27] So my Twitter as well as my Instagram is at Daren, which is DA a N, but what I really love to point people to is my podcast, which you were on, and we have a fantastic episode that we just released not too long ago, but that's establishing your empire dot com. It's great about that is I interview everybody from I got I got people who are in the startup industry that are I got filmmakers, musicians, people who have founded companies all over the place. And it's long format. It's a lot of fun and I think there's a lot of value there for people to listen to.

Speaker1: [00:16:59] Yeah, enjoy. Being on the show is a lot of fun and I think it came out well. Looking forward to next steps with it and appreciate your joining us today. We'll include your contact details in the show notes. I want to thank you for joining us today and hope to have you back for a follow up soon.

Speaker2: [00:17:14] Well, it was a fantastic pleasure to be here. Thank you so much. And, you know, I think these things are really important to get together and chat about things. And it's always interesting thinking about what's coming up, what's new, as well as what we've done in the past.

Speaker1: [00:17:28] That's great. Appreciate you taking time to join us. Investor Connect helps investors interested in startup funding. In this podcast series Experience, investors share their experience and advice. You can learn more at Investor Connect dot org. Paul Martin is the director of Investor Connect, which is a 500 1c3 nonprofit dedicated to the education of investors for early stage funding. All opinions expressed by hall and podcast guests are solely their own opinions and do not reflect the opinion of Investor Connect. This podcast is for informational purposes only and should not be relied upon as a basis for investment decisions.