Anaisa Gonzalez Hi, how are you? Gabriel Almeida How are you? Anaisa Gonzalez Thanks. Gabriel Almeida Thank you so much for the time. Anaisa Gonzalez Not a problem. Gabriel Almeida So we'll start off with some introductions. And I said that's okay. And giving you some context of what we're doing. I'm Gabriela Almeida. I am. I don't know if you know her. I think her. I'm Lara, Biondo's boyfriend. Anaisa Gonzalez Yes. Gabriel Almeida Okay, cool. I don't know if you knew that so that's how I got connected to you and then to you. I am originally from Brazil and I recently graduated from my MBA at mit and that's where I met Emilio. You want to give a little intro, Emilio, about Can you hear us, Emilio? I think Emilio can't hear us. Let me tell you a little bit about what we're doing while he tries to. His audio is not working. Basically we graduated from our MBA and now we're on this entrepreneurial startup program at mit. an incubator for startups. And we're currently exploring a thesis for outsourcing specifically for interior design firms and architecture firms and everyone else in this ecosystem. General contractors. So that's what bring us to speak to you today. Gabriel Almeida So would love to get your thoughts on general outsourcing for interior design firm. It can be in the perspective of your firm and your idea of the whole market. Feel free to tell us a little bit about yourself before we get into as well, but I think that's covers what we're trying to do here. Anaisa Gonzalez Yeah, Ju mentioned something that what you guys were doing, mainly what I do is finance, financials, all the bookkeeping, all the hr, everything that has to do with the office organization of itself. I do overhear all of the design stuff and a lot of the outsourcing and stuff like that personally for this firm. Our boss, Deborah, she's very hands on and micromanager. So for her outsourcing it's a bit of an issue because she feels like she can't control and like she likes to sit with them and go over every drawings or have an input on something at all times. So for us outsourcing has been kind of a hassle a bit just because of that, the way Deborah is in particularly. Anaisa Gonzalez Other than that it's also hard to find people that will kind of have the same level of quality as what we wanted to show. So mostly we've tried to keep things in the office, you know, for that. Emilio Alvarez Those two reasons and how does the. How does she usually give Anaisa Gonzalez She will like, meetings, sit with them, go over all the drawings, goes on her phone, Google things. Mostly like that in person. Gabriel Almeida so you're saying that for Deborah, specific case, she doesn't want to do, like, the drafting outsourcing because she wants to be close to the drawings. Anaisa Gonzalez Yeah, she's more hands on and likes to, check every little detail. We are gonna like, a. She is kind of thinking of, like, opening something in Peru right now, which we're working on. Or she's working on. Gabriel Almeida Okay. Emilio Alvarez What led to the change? Anaisa Gonzalez I have no clue. She just decided one day, like, oh, I'm gonna try it. But it's kind of like she wants to do it like her own company. Like, she will hire the people in Peru. outsource, more like, from have a team over there that's kind of. Emilio Alvarez And if that's the case, do you know, like, what she plans on doing to, like, be able to be close to the designers? Anaisa Gonzalez There's one designer who. She's here on a work visa, and unfortunately her visa, it's so she has to go back to Peru. And I think that might have started the whole idea because she will be in so we're contracting her from and she will oversee that team based on what she's learned while being here with us. Emilio Alvarez Got it. And do you. And there's maybe too much but, like, do you like, what's going to happen in terms of, like, payroll legally? Like, how does that whole thing work? Compliance. Anaisa Gonzalez Well, clients are oblivious to all of this. Their main concern is that their project gets completed. So how it gets completed, like, we. We keep that away from there. There's no need to share it up with them unless going to be in higher extra cost. But we're trying to keep like, low cost as much as we can HR wise like, legal wise, as a out of the country contractor type of we will send payments directly to and then they will be responsible for any taxes that they have to pay over there. Over here, with our CPA will just run as outside services. And it's just it cost but there's no implications. Like, we don't have to pay unemployment compensation. We don't have to do the. The whole payroll taxes and all of that. Gabriel Almeida Got it. so you're saying that this HR firm that you guys which is something that Juliana mentioned. the benefits. Anaisa Gonzalez No, I do everything. Gabriel Almeida You do it. what do they do? Why do you need Anaisa Gonzalez They create policies and they implement them? Apparently, I wasn't good at implementing because I'm a mother hen and I give them what they want. So I'm not allowed to. Gabriel Almeida But tell what do you mean by they implement What does that mean? Anaisa Gonzalez For example, they created the employee handbook. Gabriel Almeida Okay. Anaisa Gonzalez From the beginning, we've been a very small so it's been Deborah in the front. And then when I started working for her, I took over most of the office management thing, part of it. So it's been very loosey goosey. And then when we grew to about 17 people kind of became a mess because people were given different benefits and this and that. So they were trying to. There was an issue. We had employee and we talked to labor law and they recommended we had a HR person which up to that point it was me. But like I said, I'm a people pleaser. So I was not as severe. No, it's not the right word. Gabriel Almeida I hear you. Anaisa Gonzalez So that's why we mainly outsource it. So basically they're creating the right policies to comply with all the legal aspects of Florida's labor laws. And then advise Deborah on anything that has to do with salary increases based on merit and based on years work here they help me basically set up policies for arriving on time. My benefit goes with that. They create job offers, they do all those things. The process in part of payroll, who gets which salary. That's mainly first ever. They advise her basically on those things. Gabriel Almeida Got it. I'm curious about that and I like, do you know how the advisor is it just based on what everyone else is gaining on the firm or they come with data from the market as to the average and what people should be making. Anaisa Gonzalez Correct. So last year we had a. A review of it because up to last year were like, it's whatever Deborah decided or whatever the employee requested. So what they did is they took into account our positions are degrees, those years of experience and how we like Deborah kind of did a review and then for a scale and she will rate us. So based on all that information, they put it into the system, a system they have that takes. Compares it to the interior design field. Got it around the world. So based on that they came back to her with a range of low to high to mid. Gabriel Almeida Got it. Got it. And what's the name of the firm? Anaisa Gonzalez And aa puzzle. Gabriel Almeida HR puzzle. Hr. like, that data would be super helpful for our research on aa. the kind like, average for designers and like, wages, that kind of stuff. Is that something that, like, you think we would be able to get from you guys or from puzzle? Anaisa Gonzalez Mostly from them. They. They didn't share with us. I think that part they only share with Deborah. Gabriel Almeida Okay. Yeah, no problem. Okay, so let me. Let me ask you this. An isa. So when you look at, like, what you do for out. Before I go into that, do you know how much you pay them? puzzle and like, how you pay them? Like, is it like, per month and. Anaisa Gonzalez How long we're on a monthly 20, 100 per month. Gabriel Almeida And how long have you been with them so far? Anaisa Gonzalez We're gonna be two years. Gabriel Almeida Two years. And have they. Have. Has it been good? Are you satisfied with it? Anaisa Gonzalez For me, it does help because it takes a lot of what I had to do. And I think for it also helps her not have to be the confrontation between what should be done by law and what she wants to do. Of course, I would think so. It does help her on that part. So far. Yeah, they've provided mostly. They've helped me. Gabriel Almeida Yeah. Anaisa Gonzalez Because it was all of them. And then everyone had different questions and there was a lot of issues with this and that. So they've been managing all that, like, taking care of all the benefits, answering questions about benefits and stuff like that. Gabriel Almeida But they don't help like, recruiting. And staffing? Anaisa Gonzalez No, no. They. Deborah will send like, the CV of a person and they'll kind of do like a. A little check of like, the qualifications and stuff like that based on the job description that Deborah, with them created. Gabriel Almeida Got it, Got it. Anaisa Gonzalez They don't. They don't do interviews or anything like that. Gabriel Almeida Got it. Or find the talent. Got it. Anaisa Gonzalez And no. Gabriel Almeida Is there anything about their, like, service that you're not completely satisfied with an eyes or you think it'd be done Anaisa Gonzalez Not necessarily. I think they're also kind of holding back on what they can do because according to like, there was one part where Deborah wanted them to, deal with the letting go of the employee. And they told me that unfortunately, because they're not on our payroll or within the company, that is something that they were not able to do. So things like implementing or doing things like let go hiring and all of they do not do just because they're not. Gabriel Almeida And what is. What is letting go involve of as to like, what did Deborah want them to do exactly in the letting go process? Anaisa Gonzalez So right now, before, when an employee will likely for the revolt on employment, it was more of like, we're letting you go. And that's now the process is there's a formal letter that is sent either if they're being let go, if they're and there is an exit interview that they do. Gabriel Almeida Okay. Anaisa Gonzalez As well as all the legal paperwork that needs to be completed when someone needs a firm. Gabriel Almeida Okay, got it. And can you tell me a little bit about as you mentioned, you do like, finance, right? Is that the entirety of the scope of your job or is there other functions that you also do? Anaisa Gonzalez I do everything, so. Emilio Alvarez Okay. Anaisa Gonzalez And it's funny because I say but it's like that. So I managed. I managed the office from paying the rent, getting all the permits, all the insurances that we need to have to run the business. I also do all the billing for clients. I do all the bookkeeping, all the reconciliations. I keep track of the banks, the credit cards, office supplies, and all that I purchase. I deal with the trades, the guy that comes to clean, the landlord. What else? I do also the procurement. So we have two entities. We have Arts and Design, which deals with design services. So it's an hourly fee or an agreement, and then we have to go which is the company that we use to recruit. So buy and sell furniture or projects. Gabriel Almeida Got it, Got it. Anaisa Gonzalez I do the bookkeeping, keeping track of all the payroll or the money coming in, coming out. I do all the reports for the CPA on the procurement side, I do all the purchasing. We have Lexi, who it's. She enters everything into the system, requests the money from the client, and then I take over after that. When the money comes in, I pay all the things and then she takes all the tracking and all that. Gabriel Almeida So is Lexi like your. Does she report to you? Is she your assistant or. Anaisa Gonzalez It's separate. We work but both of us report to Deborah. Gabriel Almeida Okay. And is there anything about your work or Lexi's work on AISA that would be helpful for you or you would like to like for it to be outsourced because it would make your work more efficient you think, like, you shouldn't be doing that. Like, is there anything? Anaisa Gonzalez The most time consuming part of the procurement process is the tracking of all the pieces. So once an item of the furnishings. Okay, so once we pay for a light, we have to ensure like they have all the information needed to produce the light. We need to make sure that it's going to arrive on time. We need to make sure it ships. Emilio Alvarez This is for the customers, right? Anaisa Gonzalez This is on the procurement side of the company. Emilio Alvarez Yeah, procurement for the installation and the. Anaisa Gonzalez Correct for the clients, the FFNE part of it. So I. I would say, like, it will be great if we could outsource the tracking part of it. Gabriel Almeida The tracking, yeah. Which is not the actual act of but just the tracking. Anaisa Gonzalez Keeping track of it up to the point that it gets installed into the. Gabriel Almeida Client'S which is just supply chain tracking basically is tracking the point I bought it. Now it's shipping, now it's delivered. Anaisa Gonzalez Now the height The finish needs to be selected. Or there was a delay in a part that is shipping from Italy. The project's installing in three weeks. Where are everything? So that part is where we're always at a bottleneck in that area, which Lexi was mainly hired to do that. And now she has taken other activities or other roles that has pushed that. So I think that's one of the main things in this firm especially that I think would be helpful to have if we had a company that we okay, we pay for all this month, we need it in three months. You're responsible for making sure it gets produced on time, get shipped on and it arrives on time for installation. Gabriel Almeida Okay. So like staying on top of the. Of the vendor, updating you guys of any things that are happening. Right, Correct. Emilio Alvarez Is this something that. Is this. Have you worked at other design firms? Anaisa Gonzalez I worked on another one and. But that was my job. Basically. That's what I did. I did the office manager and I did the procurement and I did all the tracking. Emilio Alvarez Got it. And so do you think that is a pretty common issue? Anaisa Gonzalez It is a combination And when you have certain amount of they're all in different phases. So when two or three projects accumulate on the final phase, which is after you buy all the furniture waiting to receive it's hard to keep track of the office and put daily time to track all the things and see where things. So a lot of things fall through the crack and they end up coming either late or not being ordered and all of that. So I feel like it's a major thing on all design firms. I know there's a few companies that you. You pay a certain fee per item, I think. Gabriel Almeida What do they do? What do they do on isa? They. Anaisa Gonzalez They do what? That, that Specific. After we pay, they'll take everything and then they'll track everything until the end. Gabriel Almeida So they do exactly what you want to be. Anaisa Gonzalez Exactly. But they're very. The one I interview with. I don't remember what's name, design times or design something. They, they charge per item a fee to track it and all that. And then they will give reports very. It was very kind of messy in a way because you have to use their system to input your ordering. And right now we have our system that has both accounting and purchasing. Emilio Alvarez What system do you use? Anaisa Gonzalez Studio Designer. So it keeps both things together with their system. We had to have QuickBooks and their system and kind of input things both places. It was a little bit of a mess. Gabriel Almeida It sounds like it would better just to have someone doing that manual work. Right, Correct. Got it. And this is something that a lot of. For example, pulls her hairs about every day. I see it all the time. exactly the issue that Anais is describing. So let me ask you this. And I said this is something that it's a cost that you guys don't have that if you were outsourcing you would have. Like someone that's like doing this. Anaisa Gonzalez Correct. So it will. Ideally it would be a person or a group because when you have four projects tracking at the same time, you come back to the same issue where the. The time and the day doesn't allow you to call every company. Gabriel Almeida Yeah, that makes sense. But what I'm trying to get to is this would be either a full time person or a recurring service although cost efficient because it would be outsourced, probably based in Latin America. It's an extra cost that you guys don't have today. How do you think would receive do you think she'd be hesitant to it? Anaisa Gonzalez I think the cost will be. I weigh by the benefits of it because we can always add that cost to our fees when providing the agreement. If it means that everything will be arriving on time, it will arrive correctly. We'll have less errors on having to change things when they arrive. Which it's time consuming and it causes aggravation with the clients. Gabriel Almeida Yeah. Anaisa Gonzalez Sometimes oh, we want to move but three or four people. Gabriel Almeida Absolutely. And it's not. And it's not part of your core business. staying on top of inventory delivery. that's not part of your. Anaisa Gonzalez No, no. Our main thing is the design part of it ordering everything and then the rest installing it and ensuring that everything's completed on time. Gabriel Almeida And do you think that this is something that's needed by other players in the ecosystem and isa needed by architects that are not design firms? Needed by Woodmills, or not. Anaisa Gonzalez So sure about the. the Woodmills and all of that. Designer wise, Yes. I have my co workers who have started their own companies and it's always the same issue. Everything's good up to the point that they pay for the things and they need to know where they are before installation. That's where things go a little bit messy, especially if there's multiple projects installing around the same time. Gabriel Almeida Got it. Emilio Alvarez And quick question, in terms of. Like you mentioned you use studio designer. is it working Anaisa Gonzalez Is it not for me it does because I have everything in there. I have the money coming in, the money that's going to go out, what we're missing, what we need to request from the clients. It has a lot of functions where you can input information. It'll give you really good reports on it. And I'm OCD on how things look. So you can. You have your description, you have your picture, you have your things. It tracks if changes were made. Let's say something went up from price. It'll tell you when it went up and who did the change. So it's good to track any changes and keep everything changing. Gabriel Almeida What Anisa. Traction. Anaisa Gonzalez sometimes they'll order a light that is polished nickel and then they end up make one and it runs three months into the project. That sometimes gives us a price increase and some. And clients will be like, back, wait, I approved this at 3000. Why is it 3500? Gabriel Almeida It understands you what was changed. Okay, got it Correct. Anaisa Gonzalez And it allows me to talk to the client, this changed because you made a change on this date. Stuff like that. Gabriel Almeida And this is made specifically for designers, the software? Anaisa Gonzalez this specific one is. And also the other ones like and stuff like that. You need to have them For the Procurement and then QuickBooks for the accounting part. So you will do systems. Gabriel Almeida Got it. And how much do you pay for Per month or per Anaisa Gonzalez I think we're. I'm on a yearly and it's about seven something 750. Gabriel Almeida And you're the only one that has a seat? Anaisa Gonzalez No, no, we have at the beginning. Not at the beginning. About three years ago, designers were responsible for inputting their own proposals into the system. items become too overwhelmed from the designer. So if we decided that were going to hire a person to do this. That's where Lexi comes in. So right now I have a seat, Lexi has a seat and we have about five other seats. Some designers still go in there and they like to. To track their things, see if we pay for it, see when it was paid. Some if Lexus to back up. They'll go in themselves and input the information. So I have a few seats. Gabriel Almeida Okay, got it. Emilio Alvarez Let me ask you feel like it's good value or. Or is it been this expensive end. Anaisa Gonzalez like, for the people that rarely use it. I feel like it's no reason for us to pay for it. For myself, I. It's great because I have everything in there. Emilio Alvarez Got it. Gabriel Almeida And out of all the things on a other things you can think about your job and the way your firm operates apart from this like supplying chain tracking service that you think would be great to have someone fully dedicated to that and a cost efficient basis. Is there anything else that you think you would really like to outsource and that would be great if you could hire a service or someone else remotely to do it? Anaisa Gonzalez Ideally, yes. There's a few places where we. It would be great if we can have one person dedicated to all this and overseeing all the things. Gabriel Almeida what? Anaisa Gonzalez Site visits. Gabriel Almeida Site visits? Anaisa Gonzalez Yeah, sometimes it's. It's. Designers don't necessarily have the time to go and measure specific things. when we're buying sometimes things are too big, too little. Because there was maybe a. We went by the plan, but no one went on site to triple check the sizing was accurate because contractors don't always bill according to plan. They'll move a wall a little bit so that changes the overall thing. So that will be one thing. Designers do go to job sites, but drawings plus job site visits not always give them the time to dedicate. So that would be one thing that. Gabriel Almeida Okay. Anaisa Gonzalez I also think it will be great to have a person that will go to each job site once a week. Gabriel Almeida What about if it's something that's remote And I use it like the supply chain thing can be remote, right? Anaisa Gonzalez That can be remote. I think remote will be mainly the drawings and the supply chain. Gabriel Almeida Okay, cool. And then for the drawings in Aiza, I know that it's not your area of but one of the things that we're hearing is a pain point for. Because a lot of the firms already do the drawings overseas with people Right. They already have someone, like, in another country, like, that. But is trying to do now with Peru. They say that a hard part about that is when you're not in the same office as that person, there has to be back and forth like, email, of different versions. And it's. There's no system that people use now keep track like, the revisions and the different versions, and sometimes errors that were corrected before come up again. Gabriel Almeida Do you think that if Deborah goes forward with this person in Peru, these drawers in do you think that she would be willing to pay for a very simple software that makes that communication, that tracking of editing of versions between the person that's there and the designers in Miami more efficient and more accurate? Anaisa Gonzalez I would say yes. I also, because we've done it in the past where we've had someone from Peru, the joins and. And the one issue that I hear a lot with them having is that they'll do, like, the initial meeting and this is what we need. This is what we want. And then there's been a lot of back and forth and kind of frustration okay, we spoke about this during this time, but it was done completely different. And then we had another meeting where we said, okay, this needs to change, but it was still change, but it's still incorrectly, so. Gabriel Almeida Got it, Got it. Anaisa Gonzalez Not sure what type of system can kind of like, do that. right now with the zoom and the AI, Like, I get a report when they do so that kind of like, clarify if, like, something wasn't understood while they were meeting and then carry it but not sure what type of system could exist. That will tell like, this which is revision one, three teams change. And then you had this and out of the three, two needed to be and then they were. Emilio Alvarez Would that be valuable? Anaisa Gonzalez That would be great. Sometimes we have clients that change, like, one thing, and we're this is your fifth revision. And they're like, I don't understand. They all look the same to me. So it will be great to be able to say, so here you have the revision right now, what we're doing, we open, overwrite. Gabriel Almeida Got it. Anaisa Gonzalez Because if we don't then the files are way big. Gabriel Almeida Got it, got it. That's super useful. I just wanted to wrap up you know, thanking you so much for your time. Your generosity been super helpful. Do you have any other connections, people on ISA in the industry and other interior design firms, architecture firms, wood mills, furniture design studios, gcs. anyone that we can potentially talk to further our research more. Anaisa Gonzalez Well, I know a bunch of people. I interact with them, I pay them. So. but what specific information, guys? Gabriel Almeida Yeah, we're trying to really and I said so to give you some context, to be very transparent. We're trying to see if it's worth starting a, like, outsourcing business focused for your ecosystem. But to do that and de risk as much as possible before trying to do we're trying to speak to as many people as possible to you know, their needs, their interest in outsourcing, if they are ready or satisfied with how they do things. So that's. That's really what we're trying to get out of these conversations. Anaisa Gonzalez Okay. All right, let me talk to a few of them. Gabriel Almeida Great. Anaisa Gonzalez And then I can put you guys in contact. Gabriel Almeida Thank you so much. I'll show you an email, you know, so you have time and everything about it. But thank you so much. Appreciate it. Anaisa Gonzalez Happy to help. Gabriel Almeida All right, take care. Have a good one. Anaisa Gonzalez Bye. Bye.