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 you know her. I'm Lara, Biondo's boyfriend.

Anaisa Gonzalez  
Yes.

Gabriel Almeida  
Okay, cool. I don't know if you knew that already, but so that's how you know 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 yourself? 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. Like 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. Right. Woodmills, General contractors. So that's what bring us to speak to you today.

Gabriel Almeida  
So would love to get like your thoughts on like general like 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  
All right. 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 like 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 like go over every drawings or like have an input on something at all times. So for us outsourcing has been kind of a like 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 input?

Anaisa Gonzalez  
She will have, like, meetings, sit with them, go over all the drawings, goes on her phone, Google things. Mostly like that in person.

Gabriel Almeida  
Okay, 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, like, check every little detail. We are gonna start, 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. Not, like, outsource, more of, like, from here, 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 ending, so she has to go back to Peru. And I think that might have started the whole idea because she will be in Peru, so we're contracting her from there, 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 detail, but, like, do you know, 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 it's, like, going to be in higher extra cost. But we're trying to keep it, like, low cost as much as we can HR wise or like, legal wise, as a out of the country contractor type of work, we will send payments directly to Peru, 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 deducted, 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. Okay, so you're saying that this HR firm that you guys outsource, which is something that Juliana mentioned. Payroll, the benefits.

Anaisa Gonzalez  
No, I do everything.

Gabriel Almeida  
You do it. So what do they do? Why do you need them?

Anaisa Gonzalez  
They create policies and they implement them? Apparently, yes. 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 me, what do you mean by like they implement policies? 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 firm, 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 like 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 like salary increases based on merit and based on like years work here they help me basically set up policies for like arriving on time. My benefit goes with that. They create job offers, they do all those things. The process in part of payroll, the which who gets which salary. That's mainly first ever. They advise her basically on those things.

Gabriel Almeida  
Got it. Like I'm curious about that and I like, do you know how the advisor is it just like based on what everyone else is gaining on the firm or they come with like data from the market as to like 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 basically, or whatever the employee requested. So what they did is they took into account our positions are degrees, those years of experience and an overall how we like Deborah kind of did like a review and then for like 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 like 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. Great. And like, that data would be super helpful for our research on aa. Like the kind of, 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. 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? Like 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. All right. 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 Deborah, it also helps her not have to be the confrontation between what is 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 with, like, recruiting. Right, right. And staffing?

Anaisa Gonzalez  
No, no. They. Deborah will send them, 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. Right, okay. 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 better?

Anaisa Gonzalez  
Not necessarily. I think they're also kind of holding back on what they can do because according to them, or like, there was one part where Deborah wanted them to, like, 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 that, like let go hiring and all of that, 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 quit, 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. All right. And can you tell me a little bit about like, as you mentioned, you do like, finance, right? Okay. Is that like 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 it, but it's like that. So I managed. I managed the office from like 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, like 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 home, which is the company that we use to recruit. So buy and sell furniture or projects.

Gabriel Almeida  
Got it, Got it. Okay.

Anaisa Gonzalez  
I do the bookkeeping, the 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 like your assistant or.

Anaisa Gonzalez  
It's separate. We work together, but we 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 or you think, like, you shouldn't be doing that. Like, is there anything?

Anaisa Gonzalez  
Definitely. 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 buying, but just the tracking.

Anaisa Gonzalez  
Keeping track of it up to the point that it gets installed into the.

Gabriel Almeida  
Client'S house, which is just like supply chain tracking basically is like tracking like the point I bought it. Now it's shipping, now it's delivered.

Anaisa Gonzalez  
Now the height is. 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 said, okay, we pay for all this month, we need it by in three months. You're responsible for making sure it gets produced on time, get shipped on time, and it arrives on time for installation.

Gabriel Almeida  
Okay. So like staying on top of the. Of the vendor, like 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 like a pretty common issue?

Anaisa Gonzalez  
It is a combination because. And when you have certain amount of projects, 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 like 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 like kind of messy in a way because you have to use their system to input your ordering. And their system didn't like 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 like 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. Like exactly the issue that Anais is describing. So let me ask you this. And I said this is something that like it's a cost that you guys don't have that if you were like outsourcing you would have. Right. 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 like what I'm trying to get to is like this would be either a full time person or a recurring service that 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 like receive that? Like 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 like oh, we want to move in, but three or four people.

Gabriel Almeida  
Absolutely. And it's not. And it's not part of your core business. Right. Like staying on top of like inventory delivery. Like 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 like other players in the ecosystem and isa like needed by architects that are not design firms? Needed by Woodmills, like or not.

Anaisa Gonzalez  
So sure about the. Like 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, like in terms of. Like you mentioned you use studio designer. Like is it working well?

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. Sorry. Traction.

Anaisa Gonzalez  
Like sometimes like 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 like 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 like what was changed. Okay, got it Correct.

Anaisa Gonzalez  
And it allows me to talk to the client, say, okay, 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  
Yes, this specific one is. And also the other ones like IE and stuff like that. You need to have them for. 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 that? Per month or per license?

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. Like 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 like 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  
Not for 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 the 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 like 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 like hire a service or someone else remotely to like 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  
Like 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 like measure specific things. Like when we're buying furniture, sometimes things are too big, too little. Because there was maybe like 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 like once a week.

Gabriel Almeida  
What about if it's like something that's like remote though? 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 like your area of focus, but like 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, what 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 on, like, email, WhatsApp, of different versions. Right? And it's. There's no system that people use now to, like, keep track of, 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 Peru, 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 say, okay, 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 between, 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. Like right now with the zoom and the AI, Like, I get a report when they do zoom, so that kind of helps, like, clarify if, like, something wasn't understood while they were meeting and then carry it over, but not sure what type of system could exist. That will tell them, like, okay, this drawing, which is revision one, three teams change. And then you had this meeting, and out of the three, two needed to be redone, 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 like, okay, 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, okay, 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 overwrite, then the files are way big.

Gabriel Almeida  
Got it, got it. That's super useful. Naia. I just wanted to wrap up by, you know, thanking you so much for your time. Your generosity been super helpful. Do you have any other connections, people that you know on ISA in the industry and other interior design firms, architecture firms, wood mills, furniture design studios, gcs. Like 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. Yeah, but what specific information, guys?

Gabriel Almeida  
Yeah, we're trying to really understand, 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. Right. But to do that and de risk as much as possible before trying to do that, we're trying to speak to as many people as possible to understand, 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.