

## Audio file

[Discussion with Shanti 2-5-24.m4a](#)

## Transcript

00:00:00 Imiun

You're in. Can you remind me what territory you, the region you do?

00:00:04 Shanti

Well, so it's it's expanded because I have other clients now. So I'm still here, I'm like 20 hours a week, half time here in Chinatown International District, which you know from the entirety, including those I got. But then I also for a year and a half now.

00:00:08 Imiun

Yeah.

00:00:10 Imiun

Right.

00:00:15 Imiun

Yeah.

00:00:22 Shanti

Have had a contract with the Office of Economic Development in the city and.

00:00:24 Imiun

OK, OK.

00:00:29 Shanti

I've done a variety of things, but it is.

00:00:32 Shanti

Helping small businesses deal with space issues in general, some of it has been.

00:00:39 Shanti

Advocating with landlords, coaching them on advocacy, trying to help them understand whether a space is a good fit or not, which is a really core part of.

00:00:47 Shanti

What I do?

00:00:49 Shanti

And then also the business development that relates to that, so that is all over the city, right? That's wherever they somebody applies to the opposite development.

00:00:53 Imiun

Yeah.

00:00:59 Shanti

For it.

00:01:00 Shanti

This general type of health or design services, or like contractor referrals, kinds of work, and then grant money. If I grant money. So I've helped a couple businesses in southeast. I'm working with a business downtown. I'm working with the business in Ballard.

00:01:06 Imiun

Yeah.

00:01:24 Shanti

Some business like Central District, a little bit, Belltown.

00:01:30 Shanti

And then I'm also working with the White Center CDA on stuff that's a bit a little bit different, but it still gets me kind of into the market and into how whether, whether it's working for small businesses or not.

00:01:33 Imiun

OK.

00:01:41 Imiun

Got you. OK.

00:01:42 Amritha

So I just want to add like.

00:01:46 Amritha

To you. So how you said you expanded your business, right? Like you expanded over the 1 1/2 years. So how many businesses do you actually small businesses do you actually work with in terms of development? Do you have like?

00:02:01 Amritha

Number or or just?

00:02:03 Shanti

At a time.

00:02:08 Shanti

I'm probably.

00:02:11 Shanti

Always working with at least 10 and sometimes.

00:02:20 Shanti

20s too much, I have to say no. When I think you know somewhere between 10 and 16 businesses at a time, it's really.

00:02:30 Shanti

Typical and some of it just like some folks, really some of the referrals I get through the city, they're only allowed like 10 hours of assistance. So that's fairly quick. But then there's others that I'm very deep into their business planning and projections and finding space and the whole 9 yards. So that can be a very lengthy process.

00:02:49 Imiun

So different.

00:02:51 Imiun

You're essentially work.

00:02:51 Imiun

With.

00:02:52 Imiun

Depending on different businesses you work on essentially different stages of their their with their at their lifecycle.

00:02:56 Shanti

Yes, yes, you know, ideally for me, given my expertise, I would like to be focusing on.

00:03:03 Shanti

The about to get a space, you know, getting ready specifically for that and supporting negotiation. Somebody who's outside the deal doesn't benefit from it advising them and then supporting like.

00:03:19 Shanti

They're finding the right contractors, finding the right designers, or figuring out if they can just make small little changes that don't require.

00:03:27 Shanti

You know, big permits, that kind of stuff giving people guidance on that end. But I am getting plugged in often even earlier than that when folks are like totally not ready and I can work with them and I do. But I really wish that I.

00:03:28 Imiun

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:03:37 Imiun

Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I bet so. So out of the people that are kind of further along.

00:03:40 Shanti

Would be working with folks who were a little further along.

00:03:48 Imiun

Uh-huh.

00:03:49 Imiun

In general, like how many do you have a? Do you have a tally or an idea of?

00:03:53 Imiun

How many?

00:03:53 Imiun

Leases that that you see get closed at some point at you know at in any given month or year.

00:03:59 Imiun

To do that or is it?

00:04:01 Shanti

I mean, it's not that many. I'm not like doing volume. I'm not. I'm not. It's something I've really thought about, like whether I should try to hire employees and expand, but it's challenging because what I do, as you know, involves a lot of different areas of expertise and the advice that I give comes out of my experience.

00:04:01 Imiun

Right.

00:04:05 Imiun

Yeah.

00:04:22 Shanti

You know, and so trying to like hire and train so.

00:04:24 Imiun

You can't pass that on.

00:04:25 Shanti

Study and then they're going to leave and I've given them so.

00:04:25 Imiun

Yeah.

00:04:27 Shanti

Many.

00:04:28 Shanti

Out, you know, so I try to just sole sole practitioner here. So it's not that many right because and part of it is because.

00:04:34 Imiun

Alright.

00:04:38 Shanti

I do work.

00:04:39 Shanti

With all all stages, right, you know some things. Some folks. I started work like this, is COVID interrupted.

00:04:46 Shanti

Yes, but so, hum, who has EJ's, which is the Thai dumpling place? I mean, she and I worked together for two years.

00:04:54 Shanti

Because she started with the right, like she's a kitchen boss. Many, many ideas I could trust. Her experience, you know, in in the restaurant. But like the numbers and projections, like all of that was completely new to her. But.

00:04:59 Imiun

That's great.

00:05:09 Shanti

Eventually she got the.

00:05:10 Shanti

Right space.

00:05:10 Imiun

Amazing. I love her. Yeah.

00:05:12 Shanti

Yeah. So it's not that many, honestly.

00:05:14 Imiun

Yeah.

00:05:17 Shanti

I mean, it's not even like 1.

00:05:18 Shanti

A month, because I I come, I like back.

00:05:21 Shanti

Out of stuff, that's.

00:05:23 Shanti

Not ready, like it's not my I don't push people into things like, that's not a good idea. Yeah, yeah, it's it's more like maybe one every two.

00:05:27 Imiun

A big life change.

00:05:30 Imiun

The better the worse.

00:05:31 Shanti

Months.

00:05:32 Shanti

I think that's probably.

00:05:34 Imiun

Yeah.

00:05:35 Amritha

So just want to ask like when you say projections, it's more like financial projections?

00:05:39 Shanti

Financial projections of the business itself, because folks shouldn't be taking a step a significant step up like that without knowing that they can afford it.

00:05:41 Amritha

OK.

00:05:44 Amritha

Yeah, right.

00:05:47 Amritha

Mm-hmm.

00:05:48 Amritha

One second.

00:05:49 Imiun

So in in all that that you do, where do you feel that you have the you have to help them, the small business the most like what is the biggest hurdle that you feel like you got to, OK, this is going to this.

00:06:01 Imiun

Is a theme.

00:06:04 Imiun

That's a good.

00:06:13 Imiun

Hmm.

00:06:22 Shanti

Well, for those folks who are kind of in the business development phase, I would consider them not quite ready to actually be looking for space. It is the projections for the folks who actually have that basic business development stuff down and are looking at space.

00:06:30 Shanti

OK.

00:06:40 Shanti

I think.

00:06:40 Shanti

That the most.

00:06:43 Shanti

Well, I mean, people need a lot of negotiation support, you know.

00:06:48 Shanti



In terms of like, not.

00:06:51 Shanti

Giving ground when they shouldn't and helping them stay the course and just.

00:06:57 Shanti

Counter counter counter counter counter right. But then also I mean I think that the biggest.

00:06:58 Imiun

Yeah.

00:07:03 Shanti

The scariest part? The biggest risk part is assessing the space is the space going to do what they want it to? It is within the budget that they have and helping people understand how expensive it is and how onerous permitting can be, especially for restaurants, right, that that area right in there because it's like.

00:07:10 Imiun

Hey.

00:07:20 Imiun

Yeah, yeah.

00:07:24 Shanti

Yeah, there's designers and yeah, there's contractors. And yeah, there's brokers but like.

00:07:33 Shanti

Those people are all just taken.

00:07:34 Imiun

A piece. Yes, and that world is very like, yeah, we can do this, but there's a really connected that other worlds that, you know, it could affect, you know. Yes. Feasibility.

00:07:40 Shanti

Yes, right. So it's that feasibility part, it's feasibility and the more that I do this, the more I can say fairly early on, even if I'm.

00:07:48 Shanti

Not.

00:07:48 Shanti

Willing to, like, throw a budget number right on a TI project that like, given where they're at with their resources.

00:07:50 Imiun

Hey.

00:07:55 Imiun

Yeah.

00:07:56 Shanti

You know.

00:07:57 Imiun

That's because you're you're the experience of seeing these things that the ones that failed.

00:07:59 Shanti

Right.

00:08:01 Shanti

Or didn't fail? Yes, yes. And and you know, especially with, you know.

00:08:05 Shanti

Older buildings and.

00:08:08 Shanti

I mean, it's amazing, like getting outside of this neighborhood because I sort of thought, you know.

00:08:13 Shanti

We kind of had a.

00:08:15 Shanti

A lot of older buildings and.

00:08:18 Shanti

More difficulty in that supply area, which we do. But but I've gotten into the.

00:08:20 Imiun

And my love to you.

00:08:22 Shanti

Ave. a little bit.

00:08:24 Shanti

Would helping a business up there too and like some of those buildings are in just terrible condition as.

00:08:30 Imiun

Well.

00:08:33 Shanti

You know, I think there's something happening a little bit right now in terms of just the ages of buildings.

00:08:38 Shanti

In general, that were built like mid century or before and the amount of neglect that's occurred over the past three decades.

00:08:48 Shanti

That's sort of how far how how long can?

00:08:51 Shanti

You just keep kicking.

00:08:51 Shanti

The can down.

00:08:52 Shanti

The road, you know what I mean? And.

00:08:52 Imiun

Yes.

00:08:56 Shanti

With folks coming in, there's so many folks who like, want to open a.

00:08:58 Shanti

New business?

00:08:59 Shanti

And don't have the background, don't have the experience in the industry that they're trying to enter. So like if you don't have the experience in the industry?

00:09:01 Imiun

Yeah.

00:09:08 Shanti

So you don't even exactly understand the operations and then you're trying to assess.

00:09:12 Shanti

The space.

00:09:14 Imiun

Yeah. OK.

00:09:16 Imiun

For sure, I mean it brings flashbacks of my early years.

00:09:20 Shanti

Yeah, you know.

00:09:21 Imiun

What I'm talking about, so I guess ties into the next question, which is like the common mistakes that you see small business owners that you help, I know those are kind of hurdles. So beyond those hurdles, do you see them actually like you give them the advice, you see a mistake that?

00:09:34 Imiun

They continue to make.

00:09:36 Imiun

Top.

00:09:36 Imiun

Of that.

00:09:37 Shanti

Well, I mean.

00:09:39 Shanti

There's like the folks that I get to.

00:09:41 Imiun

Actually.

00:09:42 Shanti

Now that I'm working more outside of the ID.

00:09:44 Shanti

And.

00:09:44 Shanti

I not as deep into the Community right here. I'm deep into the community, so I have a chance of getting people before they signed a lease, but I'm working more with people who already signed the.

00:09:53 Shanti

Lease and it's like, OK well.

00:09:55 Shanti

We we can try, but we have almost no leverage here, right, so I think.

00:10:04 Shanti

The the I mean people sign stuff that they shouldn't sign. They sign without understanding what they can afford. As a business they sign without correctly assessing the space.

00:10:15 Shanti

You know, they assume they can.

00:10:18 Shanti

You know, they don't think about grease traps. They don't think about hoods. The level of detail right that they need to. They're not thinking about the electrical capacity they're, you know, and.

00:10:25 Imiun

Yeah.

00:10:33 Shanti

Buyers don't care. They don't. They don't tell anybody anything. And brokers, brokers, I mean, there's a, there's a couple of property Rep only like landlord Rep, only brokers that I respect, but the majority of brokers.

00:10:34 Imiun

Yeah, you signed it, right?

00:10:47 Imiun

Yeah.

00:10:53 Shanti

That I have worked with, they just you know, it's always a question for me. Like is it that they don't know that they're not advising people correctly or is it that they're they do know?

00:11:03 Shanti

And.

00:11:03 Shanti

They're just not disclosing because they could.

00:11:03 Imiun

There's one, there's one. Get the deal.

00:11:05 Imiun

Done. Maybe. Yeah, yeah.

00:11:11 Imiun

Do you all? Do you find that you spend a lot of time helping small businesses get to find the right connections, like not just in landlord landlords and connecting right spaces, but also other referrals referrals to like whether it's legal or financial or?

00:11:23 Shanti

Absolutely yeah. Referrals are a huge, you know, because part of it too, is that like somebody who is a good referral for a while. I just had this happen with the design firm that was my go to and then.

00:11:24 Imiun

He spent a lot of time doing that.

00:11:33 Shanti

I don't really know what's happened, but they're not providing the quality of service that they were before and.

00:11:42 Shanti

You know, they're small businesses too, really, right. And people go through cycles. Yeah. So it's not even like you can just have a set of referrals that you know are good forever, right? It depends on.

00:11:50 Imiun

Yeah.

00:11:53 Shanti

Well, first of all, I make referrals to the individual. I don't like to make referrals to.

00:11:57 Imiun

A company or.

00:11:58 Shanti

Exactly. Yeah. But Even so, stuff can go awry. Get too busy. But yeah, a lot of time spent on.

00:12:06 Imiun

Referrals for sure. And that's just through your.

00:12:07 Imiun

OK.

00:12:10 Imiun

Connections and you've kind of met people over the industry and things.

00:12:13 Shanti

Like that for the most part, it's starting to change a little bit since I have the City of Seattle work because they're starting to build out a more of a stable of referrals and so.

00:12:22 Imiun

All right.

00:12:25 Shanti

We're just getting into this, but I'm hoping that with the next cause, the tenant improvement Grant fund, which hopefully they were going to stop calling a grant fund and start going an investment fund, it's what it is, it's an investment, it shouldn't just be giving people money that it's such a complicated process. You need to understand that there's risk involved.

00:12:35 Imiun

That's interesting.

00:12:45 Shanti

Umm.

00:12:49 Shanti

But there's going to be opportunities more for referrals like within that team and and warm referrals where it's not just do you send somebody and you this is the name and here you go where you actually have a conversation with the person you're referring to so that you can explain what's.

00:13:00 Imiun

Hmm.

00:13:03 Shanti

Going on before you refer.

00:13:06 Amritha

Can I ask like when you say?

00:13:08 Amritha

Referrals, like in what space is it like?



00:13:13 Amritha

Marketing or you know, OK.

00:13:15 Shanti

It's it's ever expanding, I mean because the kinds of help that small business owners need is just there's so many areas. But I would say contract referrals, architecture referrals.

00:13:32 Shanti

Equipment sourcing referrals.

00:13:37 Shanti

Attorney, Attorney real estate, attorney referrals, very important brokers also.

00:13:48 Shanti

And then also for the different kinds of technical assistance that you can get from ventures and from business impact Northwest and more of the entrepreneur training like full entrepreneur training that those folks do. And then now, now that the city is starting to support.

00:14:07 Shanti

That there are more marketing, but they have some folks that can help with marketing and I'm starting to get more into.

00:14:14 Shanti

Like, you know, accounting and bookkeeping, I want to really I need more you know.

00:14:19 Shanti

Do.

00:14:21 Imiun

Yeah, not not I do it in house now that it's been such a hard time to find people that.

00:14:28 Imiun

Work for you in your interest without being in house, to be honest.

00:14:32 Shanti

Yeah, 100%.

00:14:36 Amritha

One more question. So in in these referrals, what do you think is like?

00:14:42 Amritha

More like in top of your mind that might be really useful for people like like maybe marketing, accounting, what do they struggle with the most?

00:14:56 Amritha

If they don't get the right connections.

00:15:00 Shanti

If they don't get them.

00:15:04 Imiun

I guess you're asking what's the critical?

00:15:06 Shanti

Yeah, critical bookkeeping. There's a reason that I went to that cause more and more. I'm just like, oh, my God. Like, what are people doing? They start without having any sense of how things should be set up. And then.

00:15:18 Shanti

It just UM.

00:15:20 Shanti

In addition to all the trouble that can get you in, they don't have a clear picture.

00:15:23 Shanti

Of.

00:15:23 Shanti

What they're doing right? So then how do you plan and how do you?

00:15:27 Shanti

Make projections if you don't.

00:15:29 Shanti

Really understand what's happening with your finances.

00:15:34 Shanti

So that's important. I mean, attorney referrals are also really important. It's hard though because.

00:15:41 Shanti

For the most part, there's no way to get those services paid for, except just paid for it, and it trains are expensive.

00:15:48 Shanti

But it's critical, like I really.

00:15:51 Shanti

It's it's something I'm kind of like bottom line with folks who are going to work with me. I need them to work with an attorney on the lease because I it's just not. It's partially just not fair to me. You know, I'm not the person who's looking at the lease with.

00:15:55 Imiun

Mm-hmm.

00:16:03 Amritha

Because we can't. Yeah.

00:16:05 Shanti

Them I'm not.

00:16:05 Shanti

An attorney you know?

00:16:06 Amritha

MHM.

00:16:08 Imiun

That funny story about the accounting site before I had my in-house person, I did have like a general bookkeeper to help pay bills and some of that, you know? Yeah, this is. But they weren't for me. I just paid them a couple 100 bucks a month. They did the payroll cycle and stuff, and they put a bunch of people stuff, and then it brought in. And finally, I was like, this is a mess. I don't know what's wrong.

00:16:20 Imiun

Yeah.

00:16:21 Shanti

Right.

00:16:25 Imiun

I know we bring in a lot of money, but I don't know where it all goes or anything.

00:16:28 Imiun

Brought in house things, she ran the whole.

00:16:30 Imiun

Thing she said. I don't know what year she said. Do you know how much you spent in bank fees last year, which is wire fees? NSF overdrafts? Just not that there was money. It was wrong the wrong places. I was. I had no idea, just like 100,000.

00:16:38 Shanti

Yeah.

00:16:40 Imiun

Right.

00:16:43 Imiun

Dollars. Just some bank.

00:16:44 Amritha

Ohh wow.

00:16:44 Imiun

Fees. And then she's like, do you know?

00:16:46 Imiun

How much you?

00:16:46 Imiun

Spent in in penalties and stuff because you filed some some things late, whether it's payroll tax or.

00:16:52 Imiun

Eyes or being out or whatever. All this number is whatever it is, permitting all that kind of stuff. That's like it was, that's 10s of \$1000 in.

00:16:54 Imiun

Yes.

00:17:00 Imiun

Pounded. You know fees and some of that and it never it's like as an operator that's you don't think about it and so you need somebody to understand that it's a critical piece that you don't even realize until you get somebody competent that it's like a breath of fresh air. You can breathe a little.

00:17:02 Imiun

Wow.

00:17:09 Shanti

Yeah.

00:17:10 Shanti

Yeah.

00:17:15 Shanti

Right, yeah.

00:17:18 Shanti

I'm really glad you got somebody in house.

00:17:20 Imiun

That. Yeah. Do you feel usually people are, they want. They're willing to go for paid services. Are they going to like the cheapest alternative possible?

00:17:32 Shanti

I mean, it depends. Some people, more than others are willing.

00:17:38 Shanti

Folks that have.

00:17:40 Shanti

You know.

00:17:41 Shanti

Budgeted for it, who have saved to have resources, I mean, especially folks who come more out of professional backgrounds, you know?

00:17:53 Shanti

But so many of the folks that I work with.

00:17:55 Shanti

Especially immigrants, yeah.

00:17:56 Imiun

They work with a wide range of.

00:17:58 Imiun

The economic, like some, are educated US born, whatever some.

00:18:02 Imiun

Are.

00:18:02 Shanti

Right.

00:18:03 Shanti

Yeah, especially with working more for the city. I'm I'm working more with more professional.

00:18:10 Shanti

But yeah, I mean.

00:18:12 Shanti

I think in some ways my perspective is very informed by the fact that I have worked with a lot of.

00:18:20 Shanti

Immigrants who have not lived here for too long and for whom English is very much their second language and you have are not fully literate, you know, and so.

00:18:22 Amritha

MHM.

00:18:31 Shanti

So.

00:18:33 Shanti

Folks who need a lot of help, right? And.

00:18:38 Shanti

There can be a lack of understanding, you know, so I'm often explaining.

00:18:43 Shanti

How government systems work, how the legal system works.

00:18:48 Shanti

Right. And that it can be hard for them to understand why they need to invest money in something. That's because, you know, I mean I do. I have a pretty good attorney, Jeff Liang, who has been getting more and more experience with leases. I didn't he.

00:19:02 Imiun

No. Yeah.

00:19:05 Shanti

He's great ethically, always, but.

00:19:08 Imiun

Yeah, both of them is great.

00:19:09 Shanti

Yeah.

00:19:11 Shanti

So he's, you know, he's kind of he can kind of be like.

00:19:15 Shanti

Between 1500 and 2500 like, he'll kinda instead of just.

00:19:18 Shanti

Be like, oh, it's.

00:19:19 Shanti

Hourly so much, which is really helpful, that's.

00:19:21 Shanti

What people need?

00:19:21 Imiun

Yeah, yeah.

00:19:25 Imiun

And you know, with a lot of brokers and stuff, you know, both on both sides probably.

00:19:31 Imiun

At the end of the day, do you do you feel like there is ultimately benefit to what they provide or do you feel like there is is just such a you know it's different case by case?

00:19:52 Shanti

Like I said.

00:19:53 Shanti

2.

00:19:55 Shanti

To that, I trust out of the dozens and dozens and dozens.

00:20:02 Shanti

And they do provide a lot of service, right? They really do.

00:20:08 Shanti

Because they're they're those two are really doing the talking to the landlord and helping the landlord understand whether or not.

00:20:19 Shanti



Where the markets at whether they're going to get.

00:20:21 Shanti

A better deal.

00:20:24 Shanti

And especially since COVID like helping landlords or readjust their expectations down, people who are in it long term, right, who are developing their clients across multiple properties across intending to keep them a long time, right, and they're building these relationships with the landlord that are that are deep.

00:20:29 Imiun

Yeah.

00:20:45 Shanti

Right. So the landlord will trust their judgment, you know? And so in those cases, I don't have to do. I don't have to talk to the landlord. So I mean, every once in a while, I still do, because there's maybe something.

00:20:47 Imiun

Mm-hmm.

00:20:56 Imiun

Yeah.

00:20:58 Shanti

Highly technical or but.

00:21:02 Shanti

For the most part, they will handle that side of the communication, which is a lot, so that part is helpful.

00:21:06 Imiun

Yeah.

00:21:12 Shanti

Tenant reps.

00:21:14 Shanti

I mean I I.

00:21:17 Shanti

I had thought.

00:21:18 Shanti

Some of the unethical behavior that I have seen was maybe.

00:21:23 Shanti

Because this is Chinatown.

00:21:26 Shanti

But getting out, I'm seeing some of the same.

00:21:29 Shanti

Stuff like brokers.

00:21:29 Imiun

Really.

00:21:32 Shanti

And there's, you know, and this one, this is it's true that firms there are certain firms that are better than others. There's some that are just like.

00:21:42 Shanti

And I got.

00:21:44 Shanti

Where broker.

00:21:46 Shanti

Shows a space. The space absolutely isn't going to do what the client thinks it's going to do.

00:21:54 Shanti

Provides them with no education, no referrals.

00:21:58 Shanti

They get in there.

00:22:01 Shanti

They've signed this lease that they can't, you know, they would take would take \$200,000, right. And a whole bunch of permitting and licensing to be able to.

00:22:11 Imiun

Do the food production that.

00:22:12 Shanti

They want to do in the space.

00:22:15 Shanti

And.

00:22:17 Shanti

I've seen the emails, you know, like.

00:22:19 Shanti

Broker. Oh, it's a great deal. Oh, you need to jump on this one. Oh, don't spend too much time.

00:22:26 Imiun

Do you think part of their can? They can do that is because they they control so much information.

00:22:32 Imiun

Or is it? Do you think it's other? But why they can do that like or is it because of the the the tenant the business owner is so uninformed and it's just so much more complex than like let's say a home buyer for example. It's a little bit simple. I mean is it, you know?

00:22:48 Imiun

How?

00:22:48 Imiun

Can they? What's with you?

00:22:50 Shanti

Well, there's no inspection, so this is the. If there was just only one thing, cause of course I would change a bazillion things if there was one thing I would do, it would be that inspections, commercial inspections were required. Same as with the home.

00:22:52 Imiun

Yeah.

00:22:53 Imiun

Yeah.

00:22:55 Imiun

Yeah.

00:23:01 Imiun

Yeah.

00:23:03 Shanti

No, signing a multi year commitment with.

00:23:07 Shanti

10s hundreds of thousands of dollars in rent, obligated without an inspection of the.

00:23:11 Shanti

Space.

00:23:12 Shanti

That's I think that's the thing that.

00:23:13 Imiun

A good.

00:23:16 Shanti

Would do the most good if I just do one thing, but I would do many others. No, I think it is because they control.

00:23:20 Imiun

Yeah, interesting.

00:23:24 Shanti

The.

00:23:24 Shanti

Information and it is also because it it's also just because it's so.

00:23:28 Shanti

Complicated, right? And it's hard for people, especially on their first time. It's just.

00:23:29 Imiun

Hey.

00:23:34 Shanti

Really hard for people to even believe, even when I explained multiple times how complicated it.

00:23:40 Shanti

Is, you know.

00:23:42 Shanti

And and they're inclined to trust, because that's what a broker supposed to do.

00:23:45 Shanti

We're supposed to have to find space.

00:23:46 Imiun

Yeah, I wonder if some of the people there are thinking that, oh, shanti, she's with the city and said you trust her, but she's also buy the book, per.

00:23:52 Imiun

And.

00:23:53 Imiun

She's, you know, whereas a lot of times, I know, you know, growing up in immigrant families like, you know, we can figure it out. Well, we don't have to do all these things. We can do the construction for half the price that if a white person could do it for, you know, and you get into it and you realize maybe a little bit cheaper, but you can't get away for certain things.

00:24:00 Shanti

Yes.

00:24:02 Shanti

Right.

00:24:03 Shanti

Yes.

00:24:09 Shanti

Right. And I think less, less and less so, right in terms of I mean any a food business is going to you know get inspected right. And so King County Health is going to catch stuff. And sometimes you can work it out with King County and not.

00:24:18 Imiun

Yes.

00:24:22 Shanti

Have to get into SDC I but.

00:24:23 Imiun

Yeah.

00:24:26 Shanti

I don't know.

00:24:28 Shanti

It.

00:24:30 Shanti

You know the requirements. Just get more and more onerous, you know, and.

00:24:35 Shanti

It's I think it's less and less possible to slide.

00:24:39 Imiun

Under yes, I feel like that too.

00:24:41 Imiun

In the city.

00:24:43 Amritha

So one more thing like apart from inspection like do you think like if the broker helps more in negotiating in the interest of I mean?

00:24:52 Amritha

Say it.

00:24:53 Amritha

Should be the right thing to do, but do they if they help.

00:24:59 Amritha

Really negotiate in term.

00:25:01 Amritha

Of the client, that would be really helpful for them like.

00:25:06 Shanti

If they, if they really did, but they don't, because yeah, they make more money if they don't.

00:25:12 Shanti

It's just the weirdest system.

00:25:13 Imiun

It is, yeah.

00:25:14 Imiun

Crazy. The next question we kind of already asked which is where do you guide the small business owners looking to expand their business? You talked about you kind of guide them in almost.

00:25:23 Imiun

All directions, it seems like in your world.

00:25:24 Imiun

Hmm.

00:25:28 Imiun

Do you have?

00:25:28 Amritha

Any questions on that? Yeah, I just want like, especially for the expanding ones.

00:25:33 Amritha

Or even the new ones. Do they struggle with financial? Like that's one of the things that we noticed in our research, like finding a loan, because finding our commercial loan, especially if you're a new one.

00:25:47 Amritha

Be hard. So is that a tough thing or?

00:25:50 Amritha

Is it so?

00:25:51 Shanti

I think there's it's interesting because there's so much talk out there about inequity and access to finance and.

00:26:04 Shanti

Especially there's been some interesting investments that have been made here in Washington state and in some of our Community development finance institutions. There's a fairly decent amount of cheap debt available to small businesses.

00:26:19 Shanti

But they have to qualify for it. See this? This is kind of the thing that I think is.

00:26:24 Shanti

That.

00:26:24 Shanti

People, they want free money, they want free money for their project. That doesn't look feasible.

00:26:31 Shanti

No, there's not money. There's not free money for.

00:26:34 Shanti



Projects that don't look feasible.

00:26:36 Shanti

For projects that look feasible because the business can pay long term overtime and a project that looks correctly scoped and budgeted.

00:26:50 Shanti

You know you can get loans, I mean, especially for folks that are by pocket. You can get loans as.

00:26:55 Shanti

Low as 4%.

00:26:57 Shanti

Right now? Yeah. So from craft free.

00:26:58 Amritha

When you.

00:27:00 Shanti

And from some of the other CFI's, they're sub. It's subsidized loans.

00:27:05 Shanti

And.

00:27:07 Shanti

You know, not from commercial banks right now with crime being high.

00:27:10 Shanti

But CFI's there's a few of them that have some subsidy sources that are allowing them to get down there pretty low.

00:27:19 Shanti

So a lot of it, what I think is that folks aren't prepared. They'll like go into a lender because people want, they want lending referrals from me and I'm like you are not ready. What are you, where is your Performa? Like, what are you going to show them? You're going to, you know, gonna walk in there, you're gonna disqualify yourself, but they want the referral anyway. And they walk in there and.

00:27:34 Shanti

They justify themselves and then they come back and then start working on the performance.

00:27:39 Amritha

So it's more like business plan and like projections, they they don't do a good job in that area due to which they get higher chance of rejection.

00:27:49 Shanti

And then also, do they have the track record? Because.

00:27:52 Shanti

I don't like.

00:27:53 Shanti

Like it's so interesting because there's all this stuff happening right now at the state with commerce. They're trying to do this credit.

00:28:01 Shanti

Improvement program where businesses are lent money and then they give it back and it improves their credit score.

00:28:09 Shanti

Also.

00:28:12 Shanti

Whether or not they have the track record like I, I wouldn't make a loan to a business that hadn't been in existence for at least two years. Why would anyone do? You know, people need to find ways of starting before they're taking on debt. You know, there's all sorts of ways people shouldn't be getting into a.

00:28:20 Imiun

Yeah.

00:28:30 Shanti

Place right away, right people should be doing pop-ups. They should be working on commissaries. They should.

00:28:35 Shanti

Be.

00:28:36 Shanti

Doing stuff online, there's all sorts of ways.

00:28:36 Amritha

Well, that's actually.

00:28:39 Shanti

Of.

00:28:39 Shanti

Selling that people should be doing before they.

00:28:41 Imiun

Or flushing out your concept. Yeah. Before you commit to a long.

00:28:45 Shanti

Term lease. Yeah, absolutely.

00:28:49 Imiun

It wasn't like that before, but I think now.

00:28:52 Imiun

It's accepted.

00:28:53 Shanti

Yeah, I I do think there's a little bit more understanding of that. And I think part of it is also that.

00:28:58 Shanti

Or maybe it used to be easier to find cheap spaces.

00:29:01 Imiun

Yes.

00:29:02 Imiun

On the.

00:29:02 Shanti

Wherever that maybe they weren't very good spaces, but you could get them for a short, shorter period of time.

00:29:06 Shanti

And just going to try stuff.

00:29:07 Amritha

Out. I just want to double that pop up pet like so for a new business that's starting out, you know, let's say they have a good business plan.

00:29:18 Amritha

They consulted you and you know they have, like, a good solid plan and and you suggested try pop ups. So let's say they do try pop ups. Is that like a good record for getting?

00:29:34 Amritha

Loan like, is there other avenues that they can be like show success?

00:29:39 Imiun

And.

00:29:39 Shanti

He's selling. I mean, what banks are looking at is their gross revenue. I mean, that's kind of the.

00:29:44 Shanti

Fundamental number, OK.

00:29:45 Shanti

And so banks and anybody, including landlords that want to see it, doesn't have to be ginormous, right? But they want to see steady growth, right. They want to see.

00:29:49 Amritha

Uh-huh.

00:30:02 Shanti

Evidence of folks trying different things and one way or another figuring out how to grow the business, you know, I mean it really. There's so many ways of selling online now and there's.

00:30:11 Shanti

There's so many other ways of of starting up, you don't have to start up in a space. And honestly, I think folks should be doing that before.

00:30:18 Shanti

They would even.

00:30:18 Shanti

Come talk to me.

00:30:19 Shanti

They should be like.

00:30:21 Amritha

That's so very.

00:30:22 Amritha

Right.

00:30:23 Imiun

That's how we started raised these pop-ups never raised on. It was our first pop was the Eastern Cafe and line out the door like, OK, there's good feedback, you know. And we tried different places and it's good feedback. And we kept trying. We fry them out of waste my store and waste in the middle of night.

00:30:36 Shanti

Yeah.

00:30:42 Imiun

And yeah, and then we it showed like a pattern every time we sell out it was.

00:30:45 Imiun

Good feedback and.

00:30:47 Imiun

Worked out the logistics of, you know, like who the vendors were, where the materials were coming from, what worked and didn't work.

00:30:52 Shanti

Right, exactly. You start working on your suppliers, you get a sense of your market, you start testing out your recipes.

00:30:58 Imiun

Yeah.

00:31:00 Amritha

My God, this is such good information so.

00:31:03 Imiun

Sure.

00:31:05 Amritha

Do you think?

00:31:07 Amritha

These folks were going to a agent realtor, like, if they say, hey, I want to start a pop up for in a small space like do they help them with that or is there anybody like how do they find lease?

00:31:22 Shanti

That doesn't happen through brokers. Yeah, it happens through networks. It happens. Exactly how raised Donuts happens. It happens through friends. It happens through.

00:31:23 Amritha

Oh, OK.

00:31:32 Shanti

Associates one way or another, and it also does happen a lot. Through commercial, I mean, commissaries are the backbone of how food businesses start up, if they're going to cater, if they're going to sell at the farmers markets or.

00:31:50 Shanti

Other places that take pre.

00:31:55 Shanti

Are already made.

00:31:56 Shanti

Food and then they can sell them.

00:31:59 Imiun

And sometimes helps the business existing too, because if you're like, I have a big space, I'm like, hey, you have a complementary product come in. It's like when we had the pop up said, you know, you know, but even if you don't know the person, you can have, they can do a pop up here. They would sell Donuts, buy donut, buy coffee. You know. So it was a complimentary probably kind of brought attention to.

00:32:05 Imiun

Right.

00:32:15 Imiun

Right.

00:32:18 Imiun

Eastern also, you know helps our business you know so.

00:32:20 Shanti

I think it's the kind of the rule for cafes is that they're selling coffee and then they're selling somebody else's baked goods that are probably made in.

00:32:27 Imiun

Yeah.

00:32:27 Shanti

A commissary, yeah.

00:32:30 Amritha

OK so like so you and like people like you might be are right sort of network that they need to reach out for starting a pop up like they have like?

00:32:43 Amritha

Do you think that's?

00:32:44 Shanti

I I don't. I try to.

00:32:47 Shanti

Work with folks when they've kind of already done some of that, rather than being at the very beginning.

00:32:51 Amritha

So.

00:32:53 Amritha

So like if if they want to try it out, whom do you think like they should try it out for it? Like I want to actually just dig in onto the networking aspect of it because we want to like identify what sort of profile do they fit in.

00:33:01 Imiun

Hmm.

00:33:10 Shanti

Umm.

00:33:12 Shanti

Well, I think commissary referrals are very helpful. I don't know perhaps.

00:33:15 Amritha

OK.

00:33:20 Shanti

I mean, the thing with restaurants that let folks.

00:33:23 Shanti

They're not really supposed to, so some of the.

00:33:25 Shanti

Stuff is.

00:33:27 Shanti



It's on the side, it's on the down low because folks will probably not be licensed to use their kitchen so.

00:33:37 Shanti

I don't.

00:33:37 Shanti

No.

00:33:38 Shanti

That much? That's what happens informally. That's what popups happen through formal networks, OK.

00:33:43 Imiun

Popups we can table for a minute because actually the very beginning of this project pop up was a big part of this app. It was been tabled for a minute.

00:33:53 Imiun

But.

00:33:53 Imiun

I think the new direction we should.

00:33:56 Amritha

Discuss this. Yeah, because that's like, given that it's such a big thing for you like.

00:34:02 Amritha

They should do that before they even come to.

00:34:05 Amritha

Right. That's like.

00:34:05 Imiun

Let's say for every business though.

00:34:07 Shanti

That's true. It's for certain kinds of businesses. There's lots of different ways of selling that are that don't require having a lease space.

00:34:15 Amritha

Right.

00:34:17 Amritha

Online, you know at least trying to the the concept should be like show a track record.

00:34:23 Amritha

Right. Like it could be.

00:34:25 Amritha

Through online or some sort of concept.

00:34:27 Shanti

And it's honestly.

00:34:28 Shanti

It's not just about getting financing right. It's about proof of concept. If you haven't, I mean, it's one thing if you've been in the food industry and you've worked in a bunch of different restaurants.

00:34:37 Shanti

Right.

00:34:38 Shanti

And you kind of can draw on all.

00:34:39 Shanti

Of that knowledge.

00:34:41 Shanti

From is a good example of that.

00:34:43 Shanti

But for folks who are getting in, who have not really done so much of that, they really need to learn what's going to sell.

00:34:52 Shanti

And so, for example, folks that are like.

00:34:55 Shanti

So the gals who opened the ceramic studio right, they were teaching classes elsewhere, right? They were selling their their stuff at markets. They were building up a list of folks that were interested in them and building income over time. Right, folks who are starting personal services.

00:35:15 Shanti

Businesses it just depends on the industry.

00:35:18 Shanti

And the type of business.

00:35:19 Imiun

Yeah.

00:35:21 Amritha

OK.

00:35:23 Imiun

At what point do you find? Do you think the business owners, they, you know, connected you and you've kind of gone through their you know, help them out quite a bit. At what point do they kind of go on their own? They don't kind of need your services anymore?

00:35:36 Imiun

Or is it all ongoing?

00:35:37 Shanti

For the good question, and one that's actually we're revisiting here.

00:35:41 Shanti

Right now, because last year was a pretty decent year for openings, things that had been in the works for a long time.

00:35:50 Shanti

And that's wonderful. And it's rough out there right now, so.

00:35:54 Imiun

It is out.

00:35:55 Shanti

You know, and so typically in the past it's always been like, oh, we get the lease right, you know, and then I'm maybe helping them with the construction like understanding those connections and stuff. But I don't.

00:36:07 Shanti

I'm not involved in the.

00:36:08 Shanti

Operations of the business in any way I don't feel qualified to give them advice on that, but this year I am.

00:36:09 Imiun

Yeah, yeah.

00:36:15 Shanti

Actually doing more outreach to the businesses that opened last year, so to try to work with them more through stabilization like through year one and it's amazing the stuff that comes.

00:36:24 Shanti

Up.

00:36:26 Imiun

So retail business, it's really understand tangent, but everything under the sun happens. It seems like you never it's like.

00:36:31 Shanti

Yeah.

00:36:34 Imiun

It's the most unbelievable things, from fraud to break INS to supply chain and whatever it is and.

00:36:34 Shanti

True.

00:36:41 Shanti

Pipes.

00:36:42 Shanti

Hoods, you know, employees, partners, all of it.

00:36:46 Imiun

Yeah.

00:36:52 Shanti

And that's so that's that's something has changed too, right? This is part of what's going.

00:36:55 Shanti

On.

00:36:55 Shanti

Right now, with COVID and with fentanyl and and methamphetamine, the environment is just so, so much riskier and.

00:37:03 Imiun

Even though like online ordering.

00:37:05 Shanti

Yeah.

00:37:06 Imiun

The DoorDash stuff has changed how we do.

00:37:07 Imiun

Business now, right?

00:37:10 Shanti

Unpredictable.

00:37:15 Imiun

What are your points of interest? Like what things do?

00:37:17 Imiun

You.

00:37:19 Imiun

Kind of see as markers when you're working with the business to connect to various spaces and landlords. So let's say if somebody comes to you and says I want to open up a coffee shop, you know, like what are your things that you say, OK.

00:37:32 Imiun

That's interesting. That's interesting. I would refer to this space or that space or.

00:37:35 Imiun

Not refer medical for whatever.

00:37:38 Imiun

What kind of gives you the you know?

00:37:41 Imiun

There is that you fly or markers.

00:37:42 Shanti

Of yeah, I mean it's a constellation of factors I think.

00:37:50 Shanti

People need to understand they need to understand their business, they need to understand.

00:37:58 Shanti

Who their customers are and.

00:38:06 Shanti

It's pretty important for folks to have some sense of what they're looking for, right. And of course, there's the like, what the space needs in terms of enabling their operation, but also in terms of location like.

00:38:21 Shanti

Do they need to be on a street that has lots of Nestorian traffic? Are they looking for visibility to cars?

00:38:32 Shanti

It's important to have thought about that. I mean, I can have.

00:38:34 Shanti

Those conversations with.

00:38:35 Imiun

Hmm.

00:38:35 Shanti

People. But if they don't know what makes a location good, they.

00:38:40 Shanti

Need.

00:38:41 Shanti

To learn right before they start looking and then in terms of space like there's just lots of conversations around.

00:38:52 Shanti

What are the activities that the business does? Like what?

00:38:56 Shanti

Folks, don't always.

00:38:58 Shanti

Think about that. Like what? What are the activities that employees are doing, you know, and how much space does it take and how much space will be devoted to?

00:39:02 Imiun

Hmm.

00:39:09 Shanti

You know all the different parts of the business, how much is the how much space is customer space? What's?

00:39:15 Shanti

Employee.

00:39:15 Shanti

Space and you know it's just.

00:39:18 Shanti

Amazing people don't.

00:39:21 Shanti

I don't think spatially.

00:39:23 Imiun

Is neighborhood mix the thing that you think about?

00:39:29 Shanti

When I I I I do it's hard right now like to find anybody.

00:39:36 Shanti

You know it's it's.

00:39:39 Shanti

But there are some businesses that.

00:39:43 Shanti

You know, for this neighborhood in particular are not a good fit. I mean, in, in this neighborhood, I only work on Asian, Asian American food concepts, other stuff, other kinds of retail, whatever. Everybody great. But Asian food ways are core to this neighborhood, and it's actually written.

00:40:00 Shanti

My contract now.

00:40:01 Imiun

OK. Well, I mean like in on the app examples like there's so many boba shops.

00:40:06 Imiun

Now.

00:40:07 Imiun

So many so the empty space comes up. A realtor is like, yeah, open the public shop, they'll do it. They'll do the deal. But I wonder if the neighborhood, like Don or something like.

00:40:08 Shanti



Yeah.

00:40:12 Imiun

Yeah.

00:40:14 Imiun

OK, let's try.

00:40:14 Imiun

To get somebody else, and I wonder if that's a mix for you know, what the.

00:40:15 Shanti

Yeah.

00:40:20 Imiun

Bias. You know, the broker has a certain goal in mind and they might not be aligned.

00:40:22 Shanti

Right.

00:40:23 Imiun

With what's good.

00:40:24 Imiun

In the neighborhood where something like you or or the UDP might have a different goal in mind, you know.

00:40:26 Shanti

Or yeah, I mean I always, I always have ideas, right? And I.

00:40:29 Imiun

More neighborhood, a city that is.

00:40:32 Imiun

So.

00:40:34 Shanti

Try to steer people the the franchises are a bit of a problem, right? It's because the franchise is filling a need. People who don't know how to run a business franchise tells them how to do that. But.

00:40:41 Imiun

Yeah.

00:40:42 Imiun

OK.

00:40:44 Imiun

Yeah.

00:40:48 Shanti

You know the Boba franchise is just.

00:40:51 Shanti

I mean, how could how could one more be supported?

00:40:56 Imiun

It's like 20 plus.

00:40:57 Imiun

Like, yeah, so let me. But in in, in kind of a like for this neighborhood for example, there might be a ton of whatever.

00:41:02 Imiun

Hmm.

00:41:06 Imiun

But you're you're kind of saying that.

00:41:08 Imiun

The market, you.

00:41:08 Imiun

Know ideally you can if there was multiple offers you know you can help work that out, but right now you're saying that there's not, so you kind of got this.

00:41:15 Shanti

Offers anymore things have really like since COVID and really and really since fentanyl. Yeah. Like, you know, there's fully built out kitchen restaurants in Little Saigon available for lease now you don't.

00:41:24 Imiun

Yes.

00:41:26 Shanti

Have to buy them. There's at least 3-4.

00:41:28 Imiun

Yeah.

00:41:30 Imiun

And so so it's not like there's not a.

00:41:33 Imiun

Pick and choose what's? Yeah. It's like, hey, somebody take it type of situation.

00:41:36 Shanti

Right. And so many of the vacancies around here, I mean, you know so many vacancies around here are really problematic. There's a reason they're making it. It's not about the market, it's.

00:41:44 Shanti

About the space itself.

00:41:45 Imiun

And with that, how much? How often do you or do you know of landlords? Are you?

00:41:52 Imiun

Reach out to them and you're like it'd be great to have this cupcake shop here. So you reach out. How often? How often do that? Or is it versus?

00:41:58 Imiun

Like I just we just got get what we get.

00:42:00 Shanti

So I did that with Suzu. Suzu was a.

00:42:02 Imiun

Oh.

00:42:02 Shanti

Result of me actually having the time and space to recruit.

00:42:11 Shanti

But I I don't have the time for it anymore because I spend so much time. Part of it is.

00:42:16 Shanti

I think.

00:42:20 Shanti

For this neighborhood, it's specific to this neighborhood.

00:42:23 Shanti

Like.

00:42:24 Shanti

When things are working well, I do get referrals like from within the community of folks who know folks and who understand this neighborhood. And it's not too often that I have to deal with something that's.

00:42:35 Shanti

Really just a.

00:42:36 Shanti

Bad fit through through that way we are also just what's going on for me with my job is that.

00:42:43 Shanti

During COVID like.

00:42:44 Shanti

Right went on emergency, umm, support fundraising grants support all that. And so I kind of got sucked into working more within a team. Really good stuff.

00:42:47 Imiun

Yeah.

00:42:55 Shanti

But I'm I'm half time and I can't do like 6 different team based neighborhood economic development projects at the same time that I'm doing business recruitment and retention. So we're trying to get me back more on the recruitment and the retention support that's focused on space to be working really on space and.

00:42:59 Imiun

Yeah.

00:43:06 Imiun

Yeah.

00:43:15 Shanti

It would be really.

00:43:15 Shanti

Nice to be able to recruit.

00:43:16 Imiun

Yeah, because you.

00:43:17 Imiun

You. That's how dynasty got you.

00:43:19 Imiun

You.

00:43:20 Imiun

Ask me and you take me there and show me around. So yeah, those things.

00:43:21 Shanti

Right, right. Yeah. And I mean it's it's interesting because.

00:43:23 Imiun

Are amazing and.

00:43:27 Shanti

Like Eastern should have been that kind of opportunity, right?

00:43:31 Imiun

Yeah.

00:43:33 Imiun

But.

00:43:34 Shanti

The landlord has really unreasonable expectations, you know? So that's part of it. Like it has to be to recruit. You have to have the right landlord and the Louisa.

00:43:39 Imiun

Yeah.

00:43:45 Shanti

Was the right.

00:43:46 Shanti

Opportunity.

00:43:47 Imiun

Yeah.

00:43:51 Imiun

What are some of the biggest reasons currently that you see why a small business does not follow through with opportunity? So it may be you got got them to the doorstep and they went through all the steps of stuff and then just fizzled out for some reason like why?

00:44:03 Imiun

Do you feel like that might be somehow?

00:44:06 Shanti

Well, we had just had one fizzle out because.

00:44:11 Shanti

There was a sale involved in order to get the space, and the seller didn't agree to the buyers price like the sellers expectations were way too high.

00:44:23 Shanti

And part of it is like originally the expectation seemed kind of reasonable. But then as the buyer got more into the space, learning more about it like the space, it's got issues with its floor, it's got issues with its drains. It's like, you know, there's a lot of money that's going to have to go into it, right, so.

00:44:44 Shanti

I mean, I would say one of the reasons main reasons that stuff fizzles out is because landlords or small business sellers have unreasonable expectations about the value of the space and the value of the business that they're selling.

00:44:54 Amritha

Let's start.

00:45:01 Imiun

Do you think a lack of knowledge is? Is is part of that then like market knowledge? Yeah.

00:45:04 Shanti

On their part.

00:45:05 Shanti

I do think so. But you know, people are stubborn.

00:45:08 Shanti

And they don't.

00:45:08 Shanti

Want to listen?

00:45:10 Shanti

But I do think that and brokers don't help, right?

00:45:16 Shanti

They brokers will pump up people's expectations, make promises that they can't keep, you know, and then when a deal comes along that maybe could have worked if instead of

pumping up people's expectations, they were telling them, oh, actually things are, this is where the markets at and this is where.

00:45:34 Shanti

Sales are at.

00:45:37 Shanti

Because they're so focused on propping it up.

00:45:38 Imiun

Yeah. How's that other question? Do you feel Realtors are actually something that?

00:45:42 Imiun

Could help that.

00:45:43 Imiun

But you're feeling sometimes they can be.

00:45:45 Shanti

The so the good ones absolutely like a broker that I'm working with right now, the Pacific Rim she is.

00:45:46 Imiun

They couldn't.

00:45:54 Shanti

Doing a methodical.

00:45:56 Shanti

Careful job of trying to help the landlord understand the various reasons that the rent needs to come down a bit, and why.

00:46:08 Shanti

The prospective tenant is going to need a significant amount of time.

00:46:13 Imiun

Yeah, that's Robert math, right? Yeah.

00:46:14 Imiun



Yes.

00:46:15 Imiun

One person on my list to interview, also because as a landlord that has multiple properties throughout the city, get his thoughts on, you know, some of the things you know I got connected with him through another. Some of that my landlord at my office. And so I was like, you know down the.

00:46:20 Imiun

MHM.

00:46:29 Imiun

Uh-huh.

00:46:30 Imiun

Right.

00:46:30 Imiun

Kind of talk to this guy, you know?

00:46:32 Imiun

What holds him up on certain things, you know?

00:46:35 Imiun

So.

00:46:35 Shanti

Robert's a good guy, yes.

00:46:37 Amritha

So so like the.

00:46:39 Shanti

Sometimes makes.

00:46:40 Imiun

Yeah.

00:46:44 Amritha

If if we help with like creating discoverability like, do they actually have problems with discoverability and like the good ones, the brokers you know? Because it seems like people don't reach out to the right ones, right? Like they just find the one on online and they're like OK, you know the space.

00:47:04 Amritha

Seems like a good idea, but the problem.

00:47:07 Shanti

Well, I am slowly seeing. So Gloria touch at Cannon Commercial is someone who?

00:47:15 Shanti

I have known her since I almost first started working here and she I think she was like, started as a baby broker. Like she I think was the receptionist originally and got trained and I.

00:47:24 Imiun

No.

00:47:29 Shanti

Yeah, I can't remember the very first better, but over time I have seen her just.

00:47:36 Shanti

Be.

00:47:37 Shanti

So ethical in the way that she does things and so thorough and so responsive and responsible that she I'm starting to see her name out there because I'm sure that the, you know, landlords who stick with her and who who appreciate the fact that she sees deals all.

00:47:57 Shanti

The way through.

00:47:58 Shanti

And deals that will actually work instead of just screw.

00:48:00 Shanti

Somebody over the quick buck, but overtime that works and it seems it's I I'm very gratified by that that an ethical broker is actually expanding her, but she only represents landlords. She doesn't do tenants, you know.

00:48:10 Imiun

I like the colors.

00:48:16 Amritha

So like she still works through referrals. Or is it like she has?

00:48:21 Amritha

Other ways of marketing or because like I just want to ask like if if is she overwhelmed with the size or like is it why is she not connecting with more who might be like?

00:48:34 Amritha

Landlords that might benefit from her.

00:48:37 Amritha

Or like people like her.

00:48:40 Shanti

Well, I think she's pretty busy.

00:48:41 Shanti

She keeps popping up for me in unexpected locations.

00:48:48 Shanti

Yeah, I have high hopes for her. Should break off from her own Realty and.

00:48:52 Shanti

Start growing baby brokers.

00:48:55 Imiun

So I'll I'll we'll kind of go through the rest of the time. I really want to show you what we got. Yeah. And I don't want. I don't wanna take up too much.

00:49:00 Shanti

Yes.

00:49:02 Imiun

Of.

00:49:02 Imiun

Your time. So few more questions.

00:49:03 Imiun

Going to speak through some of these questions, how do you think?

00:49:07 Imiun

Businesses do their own research and commercial spaces, like for example, before they come to you. Have they, like, you know, Redfin and stuff? People look their own home before they, you know, even with the broker.

00:49:17 Imiun

For commercial spaces, commercial businesses, how often do you think they like, dig into it and look?

00:49:21 Shanti

At their own some, yes, some no it. It's it really varies. I mean cause a lot of folks who come here with the folks that I'm working with the city more so they like people will find stuff through Craigslist, people find stuff from looking on the various commercial brokerage listings that are out there.

00:49:38 Shanti

Of course they have a hard time if they don't have a broker right to get to those listings.

00:49:43 Shanti

But folks that come in here less so because.

00:49:48 Shanti

Nothing here is listed.

00:49:49 Imiun

What's?

00:49:52 Shanti

And they think they've sort of picked that out and eventually they find their.

00:49:55 Shanti

Way to me.

00:49:56 Imiun

Really.

00:49:57 Imiun

And a lot of it's kind of a business might be for sale or something, but kind of hush hush and nobody knows unless you.

00:50:01 Shanti

Yes, right. Because they're trying to not.

00:50:03 Imiun

Know.

00:50:04 Shanti

Use brokers.

00:50:05 Imiun

Yeah.

00:50:07 Imiun

Is matchmaking with commercial probably the biggest challenge you.

00:50:09 Imiun

Feel for a.

00:50:10 Imiun

Business owner like finding the right properties? Or is that just one of many many?

00:50:16 Shanti

It's one of many.

00:50:19 Shanti

I mean, part of it is just being ready. And that's not just about a deck you.

00:50:24 Shanti

Know.

00:50:25 Shanti

Slide deck to show landlords that's about being financially ready.

00:50:29 Shanti

And oh, hiring, that's fine.

00:50:33 Imiun

I think we asked the question about the criterias used to find the right locations.

00:50:39 Imiun

Let's see what are three to five most common attributes and or information that a small business looking for with the potential space, like somebody looking for a space? What kind of top attributes?

00:50:49 Imiun

That they're looking for.

00:50:54 Imiun

You know in a commercial.

00:50:55 Imiun

Space.

00:50:56 Shanti

Well, everybody wants.

00:51:01 Shanti

Spaces that have a lot of foot traffic, you know.

00:51:05 Imiun

Cool.

00:51:06 Shanti

People want King Street or proximity to Waji Maya for the most part. Sometimes Jackson, but less so. Jackson's a little under appreciated, I think.

00:51:18 Shanti

So they want foot traffic, they want visibility. Sometimes they want to be next to other core businesses.

00:51:27 Shanti

Parking.

00:51:29 Imiun

Parking.

00:51:30 Shanti

They definitely. I mean, so many businesses, especially working with the Little Saigon businesses who are in these strip malls and have parking.

00:51:38 Imiun

OK.

00:51:39 Shanti

They expect parking and it keeps them from relocating to much better spaces, and it keeps them in exploitative situations because they want that parking. But even aside from off street parking, they want, like, then they should have St. available street parking and rent and hopefully not like a bus stop.

00:52:02 Amritha

Do they care about demographics?

00:52:06 Shanti

Well.

00:52:10 Shanti

Like local demographic, I mean, so this neighborhood here, right? This is regional serving mean it does also serve the neighborhood and the city. But people come from everywhere. So folks who come here, they're coming for that customer base. They're coming for Asian American customer base and for folks who want to eat Asian food and.

00:52:31 Shanti

The businesses that I'm working with outside of here.

00:52:37 Shanti

I am.

00:52:41 Shanti

Honestly, I think.

00:52:42 Shanti

That.

00:52:43 Shanti

They don't think about that.

00:52:44 Shanti

Probably as much as they should.

00:52:46 Shanti

You know the households that are nearby.

00:52:48 Imiun

Think like U District it's mostly.

00:52:49 Imiun

Students from other demographic right, like Ballard.

00:52:50 Shanti

Right, yeah.

00:52:54 Imiun

More.

00:52:54 Imiun

Fluency.

00:52:57 Imiun

And what kind of business are you gonna sell to?

00:52:59 Shanti

Yeah, yeah, I.

00:53:07 Imiun



But somebody gave you a chart and said like, hey, this is a mostly wealthy Amazon working crew does a business that's like looking to open up.

00:53:08 Amritha

The.

00:53:17 Imiun

A.

00:53:18 Imiun

Whatever a steak shop you know, steakhouse, do they care, like, oh.

00:53:23 Imiun

Do you think that they?

00:53:24 Imiun

Correlate that this Amazon people, they may not go out to go eat steak. You know, maybe they get delivered. Do they correlate that? Do you think it's that data point point?

00:53:32 Imiun

Important to them at.

00:53:33 Shanti

All the way that new business owners talk to me about it, it's more like it's less about the households that are around and more about what they see on the street. You know what I mean? Like it's a place active. Is it a place?

00:53:45 Shanti

People go for food or to go out or is an active retail corridor. People are going to go spend money on, you know, books and gifts and things like that. And they don't always make the connection.

00:53:56 Shanti

To the households that are nearby, in part because I think you can just kind of look at who's on the street and the commercial.

00:54:02 Imiun

District. That's that's more how they think about it, Daniel. Keep asking me about opening up a bar in new district and like.

00:54:08 Imiun

Is there another 21 people there? Good question.

00:54:17 Imiun

What about lease like pricing then? Is that as a contributing factor like the these prices you talked to you know like they've already shopped around, maybe they looked around they come to Chinatown, they talk to.

00:54:27 Imiun

You.

00:54:28 Imiun

It's like the the lease terms or?

00:54:30 Imiun

Pricing, is that a big determining factor that you?

00:54:32 Shanti

Find. Well, there's some. There's some, like, more experienced business owners who came in, like Marcus Hilario.

00:54:43 Shanti

When he did his.

00:54:44 Shanti

Little storefront in the Milwaukee.

00:54:47 Shanti

The.

00:54:48 Imiun

OK.

00:54:50 Shanti

You know, he looked at the lease rates.

00:54:52 Shanti

Here and he.

00:54:53 Shanti

Was like, OK, let's go. Because they're much lower here than most other places in the city. But for folks who.

00:55:00 Shanti

Are really only looking here.

00:55:03 Shanti

Sometimes don't understand that relative to other places, the rent is kind of low, but of course that varies because there's some places that are way too expensive. Yeah, I mean, it matters a lot, right? Matters a lot. I mean, and. And The thing is for folks who don't understand that that means that they haven't done their projections and they don't understand how rent affects the bottom line.

00:55:24 Imiun

Do you feel landlords and business have owners have good gauge on commercial real estate trends like so both landlords and the business owners like do they, they really understand the trends, demographics, pricing, TI's and stuff to to make the right choice for location?

00:55:41 Shanti

There's different types of landlords, so it varies very much by different types of landlords, the family, landlords.

00:55:52 Shanti

Have.

00:55:53 Imiun

No idea know what to set.

00:55:54 Shanti

They don't, you know, they have no idea they.

00:55:55 Imiun

Their price at or anything.

00:55:58 Shanti

Just they're just always supposed to.

00:55:59 Shanti

Go up.

00:56:00 Shanti

Supposed to go up three percent, 5% now every year, regardless of what's happening in the market. You know, they just up the.

00:56:13 Shanti

Smaller.

00:56:16 Shanti

For profit, professional landlords are do you know what's going on?

00:56:22 Shanti

And do you pay attention and do you understand when they need to be more reasonable about rent the nonprofits?

00:56:24 Imiun

And.

00:56:33 Shanti

I mean, the nonprofits generally, their lease rates are just low unless things have happened where there's been skipped is actually having talking to me about this right now because there's been some spaces where it's just always been 3%. It's just been assumed they never like.

00:56:45 Shanti

Raised.

00:56:45 Shanti

The rent, but they have some really uneven things because of that and they are actually wanting to try to think about how to.

00:56:48 Imiun

Oh yeah.

00:56:53 Shanti

Fix that.

00:56:58 Shanti

It really depends on the sophistication.

00:57:00 Imiun

But do you think that like?

00:57:03 Imiun

The landlord or a or a business could accurately either price their answer price it, but or even put an LOI in without a broker.

00:57:12 Imiun

Like this?

00:57:13 Shanti

If they had.

00:57:20 Shanti

If they had access to comps, the the part that gets problematic, I mean, I think they could probably make a rent offer. The problem that's probably part that's problematic is.

00:57:29 Shanti

The space right like is the space going to do what they want it to do. If The thing is brokers broker should I think be helping with that they.

00:57:37 Shanti

Often don't.

00:57:38 Shanti

But if they're not helping.

00:57:41 Shanti

And they're not providing referrals like how are especially businesses that are doing this for the first time, how are they going to understand?

00:57:51 Shanti

What improvements are needed? What equipments needed that that's that part is?

00:57:56 Imiun

She said they could put an offer in, but whether it's a they should or the right offer or whatever is, that's what it gets.

00:58:02 Shanti

A little bit. I mean, I think I feel like I feel like they could get to the right rent level offer. But in terms of for an existing space, the amount of free rent they would need to ask for.

00:58:05 Imiun

For longer.

00:58:11 Shanti

Which is compensation for the investment. I mean, they're both can work that way, but they have to. That that's the hard.

00:58:16 Imiun

Yes.

00:58:18 Shanti

Part that's the hard part.

00:58:19 Imiun

We got the details.

00:58:25 Imiun

When lenders and businesses are actually interested in potentially partnering and actually signing a lease, how do you help them in that phase when you're ready is like I wanted to land like, OK, we want to figure this out.

00:58:35 Imiun

Lease negotiations there with whether they have a broker or not, like where when you're in that in that phase, how do you get involved?

00:58:42 Imiun

Or do you?

00:58:43 Shanti

Get well. So I come in on the tenant side always and it's not. I have friendly relationships with a lot of the landlords and you know they'll e-mail me.

00:58:55 Imiun

That's funny.

00:58:58 Shanti

But I think they know because at this point, you know, because I'm advising, I mean and sometimes I mean folks like Skepta, right? They'll ask me or interim, they'll ask me about pricing. You know, they ask me about stuff like that.

00:59:11 Shanti

But I don't. So I also don't have a way of like I don't provide listings.

00:59:15 Shanti

Like I'm not.

00:59:17 Shanti

And I don't really want people giving me their keys so so I tend to be more on the tenant side, but that still helps them. They know that.

00:59:27 Imiun

And just a couple more questions on this lead generation would be helpful for urban highs set up professional business profile for your for like businesses, you feel like highlighting features and like features services like a platform for community networking, things like that finding properties. But it's not just finding properties, but it's a platform for business.

00:59:44 Imiun

Hmm.

00:59:47 Shanti

For referrals or for.

00:59:49 Imiun

Everything like for like like a business platform. So let's say I'm.

00:59:53 Imiun

You know have like Oasis for example, that would create a business profile and I could set that up as you know, I can either reach out to for networking, I could reach out for resources you know, would you find that useful for a?

01:00:07 Shanti

I mean a profile that especially a profile that then.

01:00:12 Shanti

Was part of how you.

01:00:13 Shanti

Would.

01:00:14 Shanti

Contact the listing I think would be very helpful because.

01:00:20 Shanti

So often, businesses don't have just the basics down on paper and they just discredit themselves with landlords. You know, people will complain to me. Oh, I've been calling and calling and no one will respond to me. And it's like, well.

01:00:35 Shanti

Do you have a business plan? Did you provide them with financials? Did they know what your gross revenue like they're not?

01:00:42 Shanti

It's not just because you want the space. They got to want you to. You have to explain yourself, you know, so something that I think provided the basic information that all landlords want to know.

01:00:55 Shanti

Could really help save time and help the sorting process. And I also think that if spaces.

01:00:56 Imiun

Hey.

01:01:01 Shanti



If listings didn't just say what the space does, I mean like, sorry, the square footage and retail restaurant. If landlords who are picky, and I know several would actually say what they're looking for.

01:01:19 Shanti

Yeah.

01:01:20 Amritha

Can I actually dig on the thing where you said about the list business plan, right? Like so, let's say if when we're creating a profile for a new business, who wants to start up? Yeah. And we show that they have a track record. Like, let's say they did a pop up and they have a business plan. And all of those things that are.

01:01:39 Amritha

Required. What do you think? Like will that be really helpful when they're contacting landlord like and definitely OK.

01:01:53 Imiun

I don't know if you experienced this where sometimes the business owner that are looking for something they're kind of hush about what they actually want.

01:01:59 Imiun

To.

01:01:59 Imiun

Do I don't know. I've I've had a commercial space and and they contact me to go show it. Show it. It's like, oh, what do you want to do? They're like, well, just needle food restaurant. And I was like, what kind of, like, Mexican food? And it's like you got to tell me.

01:02:11 Imiun

It's almost like they're they think that I'm held hostage. I I'm dead.

01:02:15 Imiun

For it to lease, but I'm not going to somebody I have.

01:02:18 Imiun

No idea what you're doing.

01:02:19 Shanti

Yes, I have encountered that a little bit and.

01:02:21 Imiun

OK.

01:02:21 Shanti

I don't understand it. It's like people think that their idea is just so special and so precious. If somebody else has done that. And it's true that there is some copycat stuff that happens, that usually happens after.

01:02:33 Imiun

Sure.

01:02:35 Shanti

Business is open and is highly successful.

01:02:37 Shanti

Then the copying happens.

01:02:39 Shanti

Not before it's been proven.

01:02:40 Imiun

Yeah.

01:02:42 Imiun

Lead generation.

01:02:44 Amritha

Sorry, one more question. Like what so if let's say if we give them resources like Realtors, good ones and give them suggestions based on their budget and all of those things, would that be helpful, you know like when they're starting out?

01:02:45 Imiun

OK.

01:03:02 Amritha

Right. OK.

01:03:02 Shanti

Like like like a referral bank? Absolutely.

01:03:04 Amritha

Yes, yes, yeah. And like, especially if you work with the Seattle like with you and you know who actually care about. I'm sorry. I'm going all the time so.

01:03:16 Amritha

So.

01:03:18 Amritha

It'll be like if we work with you and get those referrals in our platform and and actually help set up a business that will be a good thing right in your mind. And that'll actually ease your.

01:03:32 Amritha

Workflow does. Do you think it'll ease your workflow?

01:03:38 Shanti

UM.

01:03:41 Shanti

I don't know.

01:03:44 Shanti

I.

01:03:44 Imiun

Well, let me. I mean there's a few more questions. I don't unique these critical or should we start going to the moon. These other questions is anything that you want?

01:03:51 Imiun

It's 206 right now.

01:03:53 Shanti

OK, we can do like another 15 minutes.

01:03:56 Amritha

Yeah. OK. I think let's. Yeah. Yeah, I'll.

01:04:01 Imiun

Pause this.