

THE FIX

A TRADES CONVERSATION

HOSTED BY **Oatey**

Guests: Oatey Ambassadors Jose Lopez & Tucker Baney

Run Time: 23 minutes, 53 seconds

Questions or Feedback: thefix@oatey.com

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The Fix-2025-Ambassador-Tucker & Jose

00:00:06 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Welcome to The Fix, the podcast made for the trades, where we sit down with inspiring individuals across the trades to discuss their unique take on the industry, including career paths, job site stories, overcoming challenges, and everything in between. I'm your host, Katherine, a marketer here at OATE, with my co-host and friend, Doug, one of OATE's resident experts in all things trades. The Fix is more than a podcast: It's a community, a community built to support tradespeople and inspire the next generation of essential pros. Let's start the conversation.

00:00:45 **Katherine Lehtinen**

All right, we're back at it. It's Ambassador Fest week, and I'm super excited. We have two first-timers here with us today.

00:00:53 **Doug Buchan**

Very exciting, very exciting. And you know what, Katherine? I ge- I just gotta reveal this for a second time.

00:00:59 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Okay, go for it.

00:00:59 **Doug Buchan**

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Here we go. So, I've worked from east to west. I've always tried to fill my life with zest, and I've never backed down from any test. I love to jest, and sometimes, ah, I might be a pest, but I've never been known for a person who keeps things close to vest. I bring every day, I, I br- I bring my all every day. So at night, I try to rest in my bed I refer to as a giant nest. I'm always trying to surround myself with those who challenge themselves to be the best, so without further ado, I'm excited to interview today's guest from the 2025 Ambassador Fest.

00:01:36 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yes.

00:01:37 **Tucker Baney**

Okay, okay.

00:01:37 **Katherine Lehtinen**

I mean, that is impressive.

00:01:39 **Doug Buchan**

I like it.

00:01:40 **Katherine Lehtinen**

All right, we've got Jose from My Plumbing Friends and Tucker from Plumb Hero. Welcome, guys.

00:01:46 **Tucker Baney**

Thank you.

00:01:47 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah.

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00:01:47 **Jose Lopez**

Thank you very much for having us.

00:01:48 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Awesome. Well, let's start by having each of you introduce yourselves, and tell us a little bit about where you're from and what you do. So, Tucker, take it away for us.

00:01:56 **Tucker Baney**

Sure. My name's Tucker. I live in Raleigh, North Carolina. I've been working as a service plumber the last four years now, but I've been in plumbing for, like, six total. I started out in new construction, and three years after that, I got into residential service.

00:02:09 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Awesome.

00:02:09 **Tucker Baney**

And I, I work for, as a field supervisor for a plumbing company and just run service calls.

00:02:15 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Awesome. Wonderful. All right, Jose.

00:02:18 **Jose Lopez**

My name's Jose Lopez, and I'm the owner of My Plumbing Friends out of Southwest Florida.

00:02:23 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Mm-hmm.

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00:02:23 **Jose Lopez**

I came to the US in 2004. I'm originally from Cuba, and English is actually my second language, which is a pretty cool thing. A lot of customers tell me I don't have an accent, so it's always good to hear that I've come a long way.

00:02:35 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah, I, I would not have picked that up.

00:02:36 **Doug Buchan**

Yeah. Neither would I.

00:02:37 **Jose Lopez**

Yeah. I started, actually, with medical air and vacuum.

00:02:42 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Hmm. Mm-hmm.

00:02:43 **Jose Lopez**

And it all started because I was a sandblaster, and then I got into the air compressor, went to medical vacuum, and my mentor retired, and that's when I went into plumbing.

00:02:53 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Oh, very cool.

00:02:54 **Jose Lopez**

Got my license last year, and this is my second year in business now, and-

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00:02:59 **Katherine Lehtinen**

There you go. Take-

00:02:59 **Jose Lopez**

... things are going well.

00:03:00 **Katherine Lehtinen**

... taken off.

00:03:01 **Jose Lopez**

Yep.

00:03:01 **Katherine Lehtinen**

I love it. So, Jose, you launched My Plumbing Friends in 2024. You know, what inspired you to take that leap and start your own business?

00:03:10 **Jose Lopez**

Really, I just, I thought it was gonna be the best side of the rainbow, and I was gonna have all this wonderful time off being a business owner and- ... get to do all these nice things. And, uh, it was a, a blessing regardless.

00:03:27 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Right.

00:03:28 **Jose Lopez**

Uh, but the time off thing is just not really in the picture.

00:03:32 **Katherine Lehtinen**

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Right.

00:03:32 **Jose Lopez**

You know, you open a business, and if you really wanna, like, get ahead-

00:03:36 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Mm-hmm.

00:03:36 **Jose Lopez**

... you have to put the time in and, you know, no days off, you know. Make your own personal time, but also focus on the business and not call off all the time. And yeah, that was kinda like the I wanted to be my own boss, and I did it. I just, I didn't approve with some of the things that were happening in the trade working for someone else.

00:03:59 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Sure.

00:04:00 **Jose Lopez**

So I decided, why don't I do it my own way? And that's when I came up with My Plumbing Friends.

00:04:05 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah. I love it.

00:04:06 **Tucker Baney**

Mm-hmm.

00:04:06 **Katherine Lehtinen**

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It's very similar to Grant's story 'cause Grant talked about that too, so it's interesting to hear that, kinda the connection. So, w- let's talk about that. You just said My Plumbing Friends. You know, it feels approachable and personal. You know, what, what's the story behind it? How did you come up with that saying?

00:04:20 **Jose Lopez**

That was kinda like a, a little thing. Uh, I, I worked for a company.

00:04:24 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah.

00:04:25 **Jose Lopez**

And when we would do, like, a tankless water heater, this company was called Plumbing, uh, the-

00:04:30 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Something Else. Yeah, mm-hmm.

00:04:31 **Jose Lopez**

Yeah, Plumbing Something Else. And I didn't wanna be that something else.

00:04:35 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah.

00:04:35 **Jose Lopez**

I, I wanted to be something different. And, you know, after doing my year one, year two, year three, we got an electrician that would be the subcontractor, and he would do the electrical work for, like, the electric tankless water heater. And one day, I called him, and his voice, his voicemail was, "Hello, friend. Thank you for calling," and, uh-

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00:04:56 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah.

00:04:56 **Jose Lopez**

... and it just kinda clicked at that point.

00:04:58 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah.

00:04:58 **Jose Lopez**

I said, "Wow. I am gonna open Plumbing Friends." And-

00:05:01 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Ah, love it.

00:05:02 **Jose Lopez**

... that's how I came up with the name, and I jumped on it right away. And the following year was when I got my license, and then I decided to make it My Plumbing Friends 'cause it's a nice play on, on words.

00:05:14 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah.

00:05:15 **Jose Lopez**

You know? So if somebody says, "Oh, just call My Plumbing Friend," it's like-

00:05:19 **Katherine Lehtinen**

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Yeah.

00:05:19 **Jose Lopez**

... well, who is your plumbing friend? Right? It's like-

00:05:21 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah.

00:05:21 **Doug Buchan**

... well, that's just it. That's the name of the company.

00:05:24 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Literally, call My Plumbing Friend.

00:05:25 **Tucker Baney**

Yeah.

00:05:25 **Jose Lopez**

Yeah. The name of the company is My Plumbing Friends, and you could call us for anything that's related to plumbing. So, it's worked out great.

00:05:32 **Katherine Lehtinen**

That's awesome.

00:05:33 **Tucker Baney**

Mm-hmm.

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00:05:33 **Doug Buchan**

Good story.

00:05:34 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Isn't that awesome?

00:05:34 **Doug Buchan**

I like that one.

00:05:35 **Tucker Baney**

Yeah.

00:05:36 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah. So, Tucker, what has been your proudest moment in the trades?

00:05:39 **Tucker Baney**

There's not one specific moment, but-

00:05:41 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Sure.

00:05:41 **Tucker Baney**

... just overall, to summarize what I love about the, the work I do is that, aside from making money or the skills that I have, it's that you get to service people in your community. Like, a big thing that I really like about knowing how to do the stuff that I do is that I can help pe- like, my family or my friends if they have issues. A big reason that that means something to me is 'cause my dad's a mechanic. And so, he's kind of always helped me and my siblings with, like, issues with our cars or people in our family. And you know, it saves a lot of money.

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00:06:12 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah.

00:06:13 **Tucker Baney**

And it's not always possible for people to afford stuff like that.

00:06:16 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Sure.

00:06:17 **Tucker Baney**

And so, that was, like, a big inspiration for me. And so, now that I can do that for my friends or family, uh, it's great. And sometimes even just at my job too, it's, it's really nice to go to a job and someone's like, "Hey, I've had this issue for, for weeks. No one's been able to come out and help me," or, "The, the landlord that I have isn't getting somebody to do this." And being able to go and solve that problem they have, whether it be no water, no hot water, can't run sewer or anything like that-

00:06:44 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Right.

00:06:44 **Tucker Baney**

... it, it's really fulfilling work.

00:06:47 **Katherine Lehtinen**

That's awesome. Now, let, let's talk about some of these numbers here. I mean, you've built an incredible online following with over 900K and counting. You know, what has inspired you to start sharing your plumbing journey on social media?

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00:06:59 **Tucker Baney**

Yeah. So I, I was really interested in plumbing videos. Like, I found myself watching them all the time.

00:07:07 **Doug Buchan**

Yeah.

00:07:08 **Tucker Baney**

And so, I actually messaged, um-

00:07:10 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Evan?

00:07:10 **Tucker Baney**

Evan, yep.

00:07:11 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Hey, boy.

00:07:12 **Tucker Baney**

Uh-huh. I messaged Evan on my personal Instagram account in, like, towards the end of 2023. And I was like, "Hey, man. I see you put a lot of effort. Like, you're posting all the time and I see this is a lot of work. Like, is this worth it to you?" And we went back and forth for a little bit-

00:07:29 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Mm-hmm.

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00:07:29 **Tucker Baney**

... and he just explained why it is. And plus, you know, I could see what other people were doing with their videos and, like, the opportunity it gave them, and I thought I'd just give it a shot. And so, I started at the end of 2023, and just kept trying to get better every time I made a video and really care about it. Like, do, do the best that I can, not just kind of throw something out there.

00:07:49 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Right.

00:07:49 **Tucker Baney**

And just e- looked at it as a skill. Like, if you look at my first videos, they're a lot worse than-

00:07:56 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Sure.

00:07:56 **Tucker Baney**

... they are now. And I'm still trying to get, you know- ... better with every video. But yeah, that's what inspired me. And I've always kind of had issues with wanting to start something and then just never doing it, or getting into something and then just kind of falling off immediately. And so, with this, I really tried to be different. I, I was like, "I'm just gonna do it and I'm not gonna say anything to anyone." Like, I didn't tell my family. My wife was the only one that knew. And so, it was funny, like, a couple months later, my accounts had kind of taken off a little bit.

00:08:24 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Right.

00:08:24 **Tucker Baney**

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And, and my dad called me one day and he's like, "You know, you know I'd recognize your voice anywhere." And he's like, "I just saw your video."

00:08:31 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Oh, that served up to him?

00:08:32 **Tucker Baney**

And he had... Yeah.

00:08:33 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Awesome.

00:08:33 **Tucker Baney**

And he, you know, he had no idea that I was making those. So I kind of had, you know, to tell my family and stuff.

00:08:39 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah.

00:08:39 **Tucker Baney**

And then same with some of my friends. They're like, "I, I looked up this video and I heard your voice." So that's been really funny thing to experience with that too.

00:08:48 **Katherine Lehtinen**

That's pretty cool.

00:08:48 **Tucker Baney**

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So.

00:08:49 **Doug Buchan**

Yeah. That is.

00:08:49 **Tucker Baney**

Yeah.

00:08:50 **Katherine Lehtinen**

That's awesome.

00:08:51 **Doug Buchan**

Um, question for you guys. So, being in the trades myself for many, many years, it was always a challenge for me to balance work/life, okay? So you have your family, you have your friends.

00:09:02 **Tucker Baney**

Mm-hmm.

00:09:03 **Doug Buchan**

Tucker, I'll be honest with you. I read some of the stuff you do. I don't even know how you have any time to do any plumbing- ... with the simple fact that you're into rock climbing, soccer, I mean, snowboarding. I mean, my goodness. You should be on, uh, ESPN somewhere, I think. But how do you guys go about, you know, making sure you're creating that work/life balance so you don't get that burnout?

00:09:25 **Tucker Baney**

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So for me, it's, uh, honestly, social media has helped me a lot with that. I used to work all the time. I would work Saturdays and I'd take afternoon calls and, and stuff like that. But being able to have some financial aid from doing social media-

00:09:39 **Doug Buchan**

Mm-hmm.

00:09:39 **Tucker Baney**

... that has helped my work/life balance. Uh, making videos does take time, but it's nothing like running calls at all. And it's something you can do in your bed or, you know, just at home. And so, that's helped my work/life balance where I don't have to w- I don't have to work as much now. I still, still work Monday through Friday, but I'm not so focused and immersed in my work that, that way I can just come home at, at five to spend time with my, my family. I have two little girls. And so, I spend time with them, and then the stuff that I want to do for myself, I do when, uh, like at night when my kids are asleep or if I get off early or something, I'll squeeze something in. And snowboarding specifically is seasonal and-

00:10:16 **Doug Buchan**

Yeah.

00:10:16 **Tucker Baney**

... it's a family thing. So, uh, that's how we squeeze that in.

00:10:19 **Doug Buchan**

Okay, great.

00:10:20 **Tucker Baney**

Yeah.

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00:10:21 **Doug Buchan**

And Jose, I'm gonna ask you the same question, but I know you're very passionate about work right now. So, how do you create that balance?

00:10:27 **Jose Lopez**

So, I actually, I just hired two guys.

00:10:30 **Doug Buchan**

Okay.

00:10:30 **Jose Lopez**

So that frees up some of my time. But before I had employees, I decided to balance it by adding a trip charge on the weekends.

00:10:42 **Doug Buchan**

Okay.

00:10:43 **Jose Lopez**

So if I have to run a call on a Saturday or a Sunday, that takes time away from my wife, takes time away from the family, et cetera. Then there's an after hours charge.

00:10:53 **Doug Buchan**

Okay.

00:10:53 **Jose Lopez**

And if it's not really an emergency, most people are willing to wait until the weekdays when there isn't-

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00:11:00 **Doug Buchan**

Sure.

00:11:00 **Jose Lopez**

... you know, when there's an appointment available that there's no, no charge to give you a free quote.

00:11:04 **Doug Buchan**

Okay.

00:11:05 **Jose Lopez**

That was that part of it. Now, it's more like I have two guys, so I can send them to go run calls and I can make time to do marketing or shake hands, pass out business cards, spend more time with the family if I want to.

00:11:21 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Mm-hmm.

00:11:22 **Jose Lopez**

And that's kind of like how I balance it out.

00:11:24 **Doug Buchan**

Okay. Great.

00:11:24 **Jose Lopez**

You know? I don't have as much time off.

00:11:26 **Doug Buchan**

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Yeah.

00:11:26 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah. No, it's, it's interesting. It's always, and I imagine in the seasons too, as things peak and-

00:11:31 **Doug Buchan**

Yes. Yes.

00:11:31 **Katherine Lehtinen**

... other things happen, it's always a, a challenge to try to balance.

00:11:34 **Doug Buchan**

Yeah. And people always, you know, as business owners, you guys always know people who say, "Oh, it must be so great being your own boss." But I remember there were times where I'd go through phases and I'd think to myself, "Every customer I go to, they become my new boss for that moment in time."

00:11:50 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Mm-hmm.

00:11:50 **Tucker Baney**

That's right.

00:11:51 **Doug Buchan**

So am I really my own boss, right? So yeah. So good for you guys making it time.

00:11:56 **Katherine Lehtinen**

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All right. So I want to talk a little bit about the plumbing industry and the trade. So, what do you think, uh, Jose, we'll start with you, are some of the common misconceptions you both hear about plumbers or the plumbing trade?

00:12:06 **Jose Lopez**

That drain cleaning is not plumbing. It's definitely plumbing. You know?

00:12:12 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah.

00:12:12 **Jose Lopez**

It takes patience and it definitely takes some skill. You have to know how to feel the, the cable and where you're at in the line.... and, uh... Yeah. I would say that's probably the biggest misconception.

00:12:24 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Biggest one?

00:12:25 **Doug Buchan**

Mm-hmm.

00:12:25 **Katherine Lehtinen**

All right. How about you?

00:12:26 **Tucker Baney**

I would say that the biggest thing, the biggest misconception I hear all the time is that plumbers are just playing in sewage or you're constantly in some sort of sewage incident.

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00:12:36 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Mm-hmm.

00:12:36 **Tucker Baney**

Um, which isn't the case at all. You could go your whole plumbing career and never even have to touch any sort of sewage. You could be just in new construction or anything like that. And so, I- I try and touch on that, and I like talking about that for the younger generation, 'cause there's not a lot of people, young people getting into the trades.

00:12:55 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Right.

00:12:56 **Tucker Baney**

And so, it's nice to share things like that to say, "Hey, this job may look like this, but it's not. There's a lot more to it." And that's the cool thing about plumbing is there's so many different fields and, uh, ways that you can do it that you can pick something you like-

00:13:12 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Mm-hmm.

00:13:12 **Tucker Baney**

... or you can try it. You can do service. You can do new construction. You can do drain cleaning. You can do industrial. You can do s- whatever you are interested in. You don't have to just do this stereotypical thing that a lot of people are turned off to, so yeah.

00:13:27 **Katherine Lehtinen**

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Right. Well, and I applaud this whole entire group for putting out content that shows the different variety. And I think social media has helped-

00:13:34 **Doug Buchan**

Yeah.

00:13:34 **Katherine Lehtinen**

... and we talked about that a little bit earlier-

00:13:35 **Doug Buchan**

Mm-hmm.

00:13:36 **Katherine Lehtinen**

... that it definitely is putting real life application in front of people so they can see what it, what it looks like and not just necessarily what their perception is. So, how do you stay motivated and keep learning on the job? You know, what's the best way for you to kind of learn new technology or what's happening or you want to figure out how to get better or faster at something?

00:13:55 **Jose Lopez**

I think networking, especially now that I'm in with this group of, like, excellent people and the OD program and all of that. Just networking and watching what some of these other guys are doing.

00:14:07 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Right.

00:14:07 **Jose Lopez**

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That's really the new way of learning, just... Hey, like, today, I didn't even know they had that automatic deburring tool that's really a drywall tool or something.

00:14:18 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah.

00:14:18 **Doug Buchan**

That's a great one. Yeah, yeah.

00:14:18 **Jose Lopez**

I had no... Yeah, it's like I had never seen that.

00:14:21 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah.

00:14:21 **Jose Lopez**

So it's, like, you just learn all the time based on that. And just keep an open mind, you know. Just because I'm the owner of the company, I can't tell one of my guys, like, "My way is better than your way." I always try to just keep an open mind.

00:14:35 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Sure.

00:14:36 **Jose Lopez**

Like, "Hey, I do it this way. You do it that way. I would like it if you did it this way. Why is your way better?" And we could have that discussion between all three of us.

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00:14:44 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Right.

00:14:45 **Jose Lopez**

And then we could come to, like, meet in the middle. But yeah, just keep an open mind and be open to learning.

00:14:50 **Katherine Lehtinen**

I think that's... Open mind is super important 'cause sometimes we talk about that with the older generations that they, they don't want to do an open mind. They wanna just do it their way. But I think the younger generation understands that technology is moving so quickly and things are changing that you really do have to keep an open mind if you wanna kind of stay on top of all the things that are changing.

00:15:08 **Jose Lopez**

Yep.

00:15:08 **Katherine Lehtinen**

So how about for you?

00:15:10 **Tucker Baney**

Yeah, I'm gonna have to piggyback off of Jose there because a good example of networking, why that's a great thing to say is, the first company I worked for is just one owner-

00:15:20 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Mm-hmm.

00:15:20 **Tucker Baney**

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... and one other guy. And, and that's where I started, so I knew nothing. And so everything I learned was from these two guys, which they were great, but we're from a really small town, so just every- everything plumbing that I knew was just based on these two guys that I'd worked with.

00:15:37 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Sure.

00:15:37 **Tucker Baney**

Uh, which they were great and they taught me a lot, but it wasn't until I started watching videos or, or networking and meeting people like this, learning all these new ways to do things, better ways, faster ways, new tools. Like, we never used press guns. Like, I didn't know what those were until I started seeing videos. So networking and, and getting to meet people like this really, really can change the game for you.

00:16:01 **Doug Buchan**

Sure.

00:16:01 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah, for sure. So we... You talked a little bit about Evan giving you some insight into how he got started with videos. And this is for both of you as a question. Are there any ways you're mentoring or inspiring the next generation of tradespeople, either through online communication or in person through apprentice programs or working with your local tech schools?

00:16:21 **Jose Lopez**

Yes. So I am actually trying to partner up. I- I have a f- a friend that is a teacher in the Labelle Plumbing School in Florida.

00:16:32 **Katherine Lehtinen**

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Okay, great.

00:16:33 **Jose Lopez**

And I'm gonna be having a discussion with him sometime in the future. It can't be right now, uh, because I have to get my company more automated.

00:16:41 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Sure.

00:16:41 **Jose Lopez**

But once my company is a lot more automated, my goal is to get to a point where I can franchise and get these new generation of trade school guys to be able to go out in the field and right off the bat be able to have, you know, start a company-

00:16:56 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Sure.

00:16:56 **Jose Lopez**

... that is already set in stone and automated and has a franchise capability. So yes, I definitely, totally want to help, like, the new generation, especially if they're putting in the work and going to school for this. To be able to be your own boss right after that, I would say that's the greatest thing. And then that way, you don't have to, you know, work for someone else and-

00:17:17 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Sure.

00:17:17 **Jose Lopez**

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... do all this things. You could just get out of school and work for yourself, because that's what most people want to go to school for.

00:17:23 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Sure.

00:17:23 **Jose Lopez**

And, uh... Yeah, so that's kind of like my way of helping.

00:17:26 **Katherine Lehtinen**

All right. So we're gonna... We're watching that unfold. I love it.

00:17:29 **Tucker Baney**

Yup, yup.

00:17:30 **Jose Lopez**

That's about next five years.

00:17:31 **Katherine Lehtinen**

All right.

00:17:32 **Jose Lopez**

That's the five-year plan. So, so...

00:17:34 **Katherine Lehtinen**

So we'll be checking in, checking in over the next five years.

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00:17:37 **Doug Buchan**

So staying with that, you know, what is it like right now, depending on, you know, how you guys see the growth of your company, how difficult right now is it to get people, to bring them into your company as employees?

00:17:51 **Tucker Baney**

So I'll answer. I'm not a... I don't own a company, but I do work for a large company.

00:17:54 **Doug Buchan**

Okay.

00:17:54 **Tucker Baney**

And part of the job that I do is working with new hires. And I- I guess for me, it's not the best example because we don't typically hire unskilled labor. Like, somebody that has to come into the company has to already know somewhat of what they're doing in the trade. But it is actually extremely difficult in, in my experience. Like, the people we hire g- either don't last or they just immediately don't work out for- for whatever reason. And it's been a big challenge. And I know speaking to other people in my area or just other people that I've talked to that are business owners have had a really hard time.... hiring because as so many tradesmen are retiring, there's just not very many young-

00:18:36 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Mm-hmm.

00:18:36 **Tucker Baney**

... people getting in the trade. And so, a lot of the good people that are, um, out there working are already hired with another company. So it's just hard to-

00:18:46 **Doug Buchan**

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Sure.

00:18:46 **Tucker Baney**

... uh, find good employees.

00:18:48 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah.

00:18:49 **Jose Lopez**

Yeah. So hiring is tough. It's... It was the toughest decision, one of the toughest decisions for me, because it's like starting a business all over again. And it's really hard to let somebody else put their name on... Like, their work on-

00:19:06 **Katherine Lehtinen**

On your name. Mm-hmm.

00:19:07 **Jose Lopez**

... under your name, you know? So that was hard to, like, get over that. And I was able to overcome it because I have to do it eventually. So I decided to hire, like, two very, like, experienced, like, guys that are just already trained. I knew them from working with them in the past when I didn't have my company, and it just so happens that they both became available, and I said, "Okay, I could take both of you under my wing." And that way, I know now that they're set and they're ready to train somebody else.

00:19:38 **Tucker Baney**

Sure.

00:19:38 **Jose Lopez**

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And then I don't have to worry too much about, oh, the new hire is out there on his own. I could have them ride with these guys, and I trust them fully, fully to tell me, "Hey, this guy's not a good fit. This guy's a good fit." But finding a skilled person that wants... Like, doesn't want a million bucks a year, that's also hard.

00:19:58 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah.

00:19:59 **Jose Lopez**

Because a lot of these companies are commission-based and they are huge companies. They charge a lot. So s- they're really good technicians, already making a lot. So for a small business owner to be able to match-

00:20:11 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Mm-hmm.

00:20:11 **Jose Lopez**

... that to these guys, it's just, it's not really easy.

00:20:16 **Doug Buchan**

Yeah.

00:20:17 **Jose Lopez**

So...

00:20:17 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah, that's got to be a big challenge-

00:20:19 **Tucker Baney**

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Yeah.

00:20:19 **Katherine Lehtinen**

... between the small and then the larger ones, for sure.

00:20:21 **Tucker Baney**

Mm-hmm.

00:20:22 **Katherine Lehtinen**

All right, so as we kind of close things out, what I would love to hear from both of you is, what do you hope to see the trades e- evolve into here in the future? You know, what are your hopes and dreams for the trades, um, maybe as you retire, as you guys are both starting and talking about your new business? But as you kind of leave this trade, what do you hope kind of changes from everyone's perception?

00:20:41 **Tucker Baney**

Yeah, I'd like, I'd like people to look at the trades in a different light because as of right now, it kind of seems like, oh, you, you get into trades because you sucked at school or-

00:20:51 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Mm-hmm.

00:20:51 **Tucker Baney**

... or you just didn't want to go to college or whatever. But it's a great career path.

00:20:56 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah.

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00:20:56 **Tucker Baney**

And I think that's what's great about so many people making content and talking about it all the time is backing the trades and, and showing young people that are in high school or looking to figure out what their career is, that it's a great option. And as, as the demand for work goes up, so does the, the price for services that's going to help people make an even better living as they come out of high school or whatever and choose this as a career. So I'd... That, that's a big thing for me that I'd like to see.

00:21:28 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah. How about for you?

00:21:30 **Jose Lopez**

I'd like to see more unity in, like, the, the trades, especially like down in Florida.

00:21:35 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah.

00:21:35 **Jose Lopez**

There's no other plumbing company owner that is going to talk to me about business.

00:21:41 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Mm-hmm.

00:21:41 **Jose Lopez**

They keep each other just out of the loop on everything.

00:21:45 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Right.

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00:21:45 **Jose Lopez**

So it's not always about like, "Hey, let me find out what you're charging for this. I'm going to compete with you." Like, it would be nice to have more unity and like these... Especially with the bigger companies that are still owned by an actual person and not like a huge hedge fund or-

00:22:03 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Sure.

00:22:03 **Jose Lopez**

... something like that. It would... I would like to see more unity because, like, I get that here.

00:22:07 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Right.

00:22:08 **Jose Lopez**

With these guys, they're great. We can network, we could talk about business, and it's great. We help each other. But down in where I am, you don't get that.

00:22:18 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah.

00:22:18 **Jose Lopez**

You know? There's just no communication. They just stay to themselves and they guard it, you know?

00:22:24 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah.

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00:22:25 **Jose Lopez**

So yeah, more unity in the trades. That's, that's definitely-

00:22:28 **Katherine Lehtinen**

I like it.

00:22:28 **Jose Lopez**

... what I would like to see.

00:22:29 **Katherine Lehtinen**

I like it. Well, thank you both. We really appreciate you taking time out of Ambassador Fest this year, and it was great to get to know you both a little bit more and looking forward to a really fun, exciting rest of the week.

00:22:40 **Tucker Baney**

You too. Thanks for having us.

00:22:41 **Jose Lopez**

Thank you.

00:22:41 **Tucker Baney**

Thank you for having us.

00:22:42 **Jose Lopez**

Thanks, guys.