



CORPORATE HOUSING
PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION

NAVIGATING THE NOISE PODCAST EPISODE 16: A CONVERSATION ABOUT INNOVATION

Brian David Johnson:

Hello everybody and welcome to Navigating the Noise, a broadcast brought to you by CHPA, the Corporate Housing Providers Association. I'm Brian David Johnson. I'm your futurist and I'm the host of Navigating the Noise.

Brian David Johnson:

Now Navigating the Noise is a broadcast where we want to come to you and help you just do that, navigate the noise. There's so much information out there, there's so much going on, and how can we bring in guests, bring up ideas, have conversations, and also give you pragmatic things to do. How can you sort of navigate the noise? And as you know, we've been doing this for many seasons, but this season is really special because we are in the midst of a global pandemic and the folks at CHPA and myself wanted to just get on, start talking, pull up issues, really anything. From really high level future issues, like we often talk about here on Navigating the Noise, to sometimes really, really specific issues. If you haven't seen the Down and Dirty episode of this season, it's a good one to go and see.

Brian David Johnson:

But this one is a special episode, we've never really done anything like this before. We're calling this our pop-up episode. And it's our episode because it came about because of a previous episode from this season, from the innovation conversation that we had in a previous broadcast. We were out and we had Steve Brown, a friend of the show, a futurist who's been on many times. And he was talking about innovating your way out of the recession and making sure that you innovate and make change and think differently and don't be frozen. And we actually found somebody, actually Mary Ann Passi, our CEO of CHPA, actually found somebody, was chatting with somebody who's actually doing this work. And so we're going to bring her on and find out what she's doing.

Brian David Johnson:

So we're going to flip it around, we're not going to do our normal Navigating the Noise where we go through those three different sections. What we're going to do is we're going to flip it and so first, we're going to invite on Amy Raven. She's the Director of Sales at Minto Furnished Suites. So we're going to have her come on and just talk about what she's doing and tell us about that. And then Steve and I will actually have some questions for her, because we're really interested in what she is doing both as applied futurists who do this type of work, we're fascinated by how people are really implementing it, and certainly when it comes around innovation, because as we all know, Steve Brown has written a book, it's a great book on innovation. We're going to have Steve, when we bring him on, I'm going to have him hold up the book again. It's a great, great book. There's some excerpts on the website, go have a look at it.

Brian David Johnson:

So we're going to ask Amy some questions and then we're going to flip it and Amy's going to be able to ask us. As a practitioner and an innovator, she's going to go and ask us questions. You've got two futurists here, you can ask us anything at all, so Amy's going to ask us a few questions. And then we'll go through the three things to do for sure, but then we've got a big surprise. We've got a big surprise for all you innovators out there and people who are really thinking like this, who are really, in the midst of this pandemic, really innovating your way out of it and thinking about different things. We've got a big surprise here at CHPA that we'll talk about later.

Brian David Johnson:

So let's get started. So, as I mentioned, we have one of our favorite guests, one of our friends of the shows, Steve Brown. Steve is a futurist, he's an author, he also consults with companies and organizations as a futurist. He's been on the show many, many times. So please join me in welcoming Steve to the show. I'm going to bring Steve up and say, hello, Steve, welcome to the show. Glad to have you.

Steve Brown:

Hello, Brian. Nice to see you, my friend.

Brian David Johnson:

Always lovely to see you. Now Steve, we were talking before the show, I know you're working on some interesting stuff. You too have been innovating your way and you haven't sat idle during this pandemic. What have you been working on? What do you have coming up?

Steve Brown:

I've been trying to use my brain as much as I can. So spending time thinking about, what does this all mean and what is the opportunity that lives inside this time? We've been due for some big change coming, that's what I wrote the book about, is how technology will change business in the next decade. So I've been thinking about what speeds up, what slows down, if anything, and what are some ways to think about how you find that opportunity inside what is quite a difficult time and a stressful time. And not just pandemic, but looking at what is happening, marching the streets and people demanding change.

Steve Brown:

I think there's a climate now where there's more opportunity for change makers to actually enact change. And we've been seeing almost a defrosting of the world. The world was frozen in place and pandemic and other forces are starting to defrost those systems. Systems that were kind of locked in place because of tradition, think the educational system, because of regulation, think the healthcare system, because of complacency, risk averse, cultures, maybe a lack of vision, but there are many reasons why systems were kind of locked in place.

Steve Brown:

If you are a change maker, if you are an agent of change, this is a great time because those systems, out of necessity, are starting to defrost. So I'm thinking about this time as a great defrosting, I'm writing a lot of pieces, a lot of articles, doing a lot of press interviews. So you may see me on TV. I was in Forbes magazine last month, just trying to get the word out there that while this is a difficult and stressful time, it is also ... Now we just look for the silver linings here and look at it as a time of opportunity to move the world forward in a positive way.

Steve Brown:

So that's what I'm spending my time doing as well as of course pimping my book. As you have to with these things, anybody out there who's an author will know that that's the burden that comes with it. If you can write a great book, great. If no one reads it, that's really a waste of time. So spending my time trying to get the word out there about my book as well. So that's what I'm doing and I'm pretty busy.

Brian David Johnson:

Show them the book, Steve.

Steve Brown:

Okay, here it comes. There it is. So it's called *The Innovation Ultimatum: How Six Strategic Technologies Will Reshape Every Business in the 2020s*. I wrote this thinking this would be something that would happen over the course of a decade. With the current forces on the market and the marketplace in our world that we live in, I'm thinking that we're going to see changes accelerate and probably this stuff is going to happen in the next three to five to seven years instead of 10. So it's as relevant as it ever was.

Steve Brown:

And as we're going to hear from Amy shortly, driving innovation into your business, using technology to change business processes, to reimagine the way you connect with customers, to think about how you support your employees using technology so they can do more, is what this book is all about. And that just became 10 times more relevant with the current situation we're in. So that's what I've been working on.

Brian David Johnson:

Great. Thank you, Steve, for that. I appreciate it. I appreciate you indulging me and showing off the book. I do think it's really good, but I also think it's really a pragmatic tool and you can certainly go to the *Navigating the Noise* website, there's links to the book, also we'll have links to the writing and the work that that Steve's been doing, if you want to dive deeper into his work and what's going on. There's even, as I mentioned, there's some excerpts up there as well, so that you can take a look at it.

Brian David Johnson:

So let's flip it. So as you remember, we had Steve on before and we were talking about innovation and innovating your way and being a change maker. And as I mentioned, Mary Ann Passi, the CEO of CHPA, called me up and said, "Hey, I found somebody who's doing that." Like we found somebody who's taking this moment, this rare moment in time, and actually not being locked, not being fearful, actually embracing it and being that change maker and being that innovator. And that's Amy Raven, as I mentioned, she's the Director of Sales for Minto Furnished Suites. She has been very good to come on. When I talked to her before the show, I was very, very excited because as she started talking, I was like, "That's exactly what we've been talking about. That's exactly what Steve said. That's amazing."

Brian David Johnson:

So with an abundance of enthusiasm, I think I got Amy to come on and so I really, really appreciate it. And really would just like to ask her, Amy if you could, just tell us about what you've been working on. Tell us about what you've been doing, what you've been learning, what you've been putting out there. But first and foremost, thank you so much for joining us today. We really appreciate having you on *Navigating the Noise*.

Amy Raven:

Thank you very much for having me. It's a pleasure to be here with both you and Steve. And hopefully I can provide some insight to you and the rest of the association as to some of the ideas that we've implemented rather quickly in the face of what's happening in the world today. When Mary Ann and I spoke, it was more of just a

catch up, and what's going on, and what have you been working on? And I started talking to her about all the different technology and the different things that we are implementing at Minto Furnished Suites to give us, still the connection that we have with our customers, but not lose the customer service piece of it.

Amy Raven:

In corporate housing, it's so important to be customer service focused and it was my goal to make sure that the technologies that we were putting in place wasn't taking away from any of that customer service that we were known for. It's interesting because it had always been an underlying conversation that we had been having as a company that this technology needed to come and we needed to implement and we needed to see how it would work and things like that. And with the closing of offices and everything immediately on March 13th here in Toronto, that became fast forwarded very quickly. And things started to be implemented very, very quickly.

Amy Raven:

We've gone to the extent that from a understanding who Minto Furnished Suites is, from an understanding the product offering that we have, we want our customers to be able to see everything that we have to offer online. So that there's no question around what does my suite look like? What does the building look like? What's the amenity space look like? So we spent a lot of time making sure that our entire portfolio is represented online through virtual tours, and we're doing that. And that gives the customer a sense of knowing what they're going to be checking into when they're coming and traveling with us and those kinds of things.

Amy Raven:

We've also gone from a papered company to more of a paperless company and doing all of our paperwork online and making it a sense of ease from online, with all the security measures that are attached to that and all the privacy that is attached to it. So making sure that that is all compliant. And we're also allowing our customers to still come and see the product, if they want to come and view the product we're offering self-guided tours, we're offering technologies and platforms for people to go through their self-guided tours. Whether it's through an app on their phone, whether it's they've come to the property in person and the concierge has let them into the building and let them into the unit to see it. So we have really wanted to be as open, in a closed environment, we wanted to be as open as we possibly can so that our customers still know that we're there for them, but we're doing it in a very safe manner for them as well.

Brian David Johnson:

That's great. So I'm going to take us to gallery view just so we can ask some questions because I know Steve and I are going to have some questions for you, I know I have a couple. Excuse my slowness being the engineer and the host at the same time. So now we're all on the camera.

Brian David Johnson:

So Amy, as you were going through and talking, I'd be really interested in saying, so in this unique time as you've been going through and like you said, going paperless and changing how people look at properties and things like that, what has surprised you most of all? As you've been going through and doing this, what's surprised you the most?

Amy Raven:

That's a great question. And I think the thing that sticks out to me the most is how quickly, and I hate to use this term because I feel like it's overused, but I'm going to use it, is how quickly, whether it was the company that pivoted to do this, or it was the customer that was pivoting to do this, it was an easy thing to deploy from a company perspective and from a customer perspective. Everyone was quickly onboard with it, seeing the need for it, and understanding how much easier it was going to make life over the next few months while we waded through our new normal.

Brian David Johnson:

And that's interesting. I'd like to see if Steve, if you've heard this as well, because I've heard similar things, again, both in this industry and outside of the industry, that for a lot of places there has been ease in this shift. Of course it's been very hard for everybody and it's a terrible thing that's going on, but a lot of people have been really surprised at how they've been able to shift to this new mode of working. And we've talked a little bit about this in the show in other places, kind of thinking about, okay, well, what does that mean? So Steve, in the people that you've been talking with, have you been seeing that as well? That the shift has been a little bit easier than people thought?

Steve Brown:

Yeah. And I think it's surprised people, when I say people, I mean brands, how much appetite there was for a digital experience versus an in-person experience or a physical experience. And I'm not sure it's as much about consumers making a transition, as brands catching up with what consumers wanted anyway. A lot of consumers are very comfortable, in many aspects of their lives, with a digital experience, with an app-based experience. Using this thing as the remote control of modern life, to be able to get the things that they need. And so as brands have been forced to build those bridges, to create a hundred percent digital customer journey, end-to-end from the browse thing of looking at properties through signing a lease, so the buy phase. That whole phase, in every business, is having to go digital. And it's something that consumers, many consumers, not all, many consumers were already wanting.

Steve Brown:

So the question for you, Amy, with all these measures that you've taken and put in place, how do you see, once we all have vaccines and we can move on with our lives again, do you see the way that people browse for places to stay and make their buying decision? Do you see that reverting back to the way it used to be or do you think that this becomes new way that people look for property?

Amy Raven:

I really truly believe this will be the new way that people look for property. I don't see people wanting to revert back to the paper deals and the handshakes and that kind of thing. I think you're absolutely right, Steve, when you said the consumer was already there and for them to jump on board was not a hard thing. They were already 90% there. It was the brands catching up to what the consumer is looking for. It may revert back and in some different market segments or some different demographics, depending on who you're working with. So you may see a bit of a regression, but again, I think that would be dependent on the demographic of the individual that you're working with.

Brian David Johnson:

Yeah and it's a demographic thing, there's also just some people like to go and sniff out a place and there will always be a percentage of people that do. I mean, I know when the hotels were going through the transition to digital keys, so you could bypass the front desk or people who would sit in the lobby with you with a tablet and check you in. It's about giving choices to consumers who want different options. Some people want to go up to the desk, get a key, and go, just like they used to. Some people want to use their phone to get in the room. Some people want to have a sit down with a human being, but have a digital experience.

Brian David Johnson:

So yeah, I think you're right. It's being able to offer those choices to consumers once this opens back up again. Having that as an arrow in your quiver is only going to help every business that makes these investments now.

Amy Raven:

And I think it gives the consumer ... Giving them the opportunity and then you understanding what the consumer wants and that creates that whole customer service level that we're all striving to be great at.

Brian David Johnson:

Well and I think it's interesting as well where when we talk with people, do people want, as Steve was saying, do they want a key or do they want to have digital and keyless? Or do they want to just go through and check-in by themselves or they want a human being? And what I always say is that, especially when it comes to consumers and humans, so is it A or is it B? And my answer is, it's yes. It's always choice, always bet on choice, choice always wins. But that doesn't mean all the choices in all the world, it means understanding that range of choices, which, Amy, it sounds like you've been doing.

Brian David Johnson:

I have one more question. This one's a little bit harder but it's not a gotcha question or anything, but it is a little bit harder.

Amy Raven:

You promised.

Brian David Johnson:

I think it would be really helpful to find out. So, as you've been going through this, Amy, at Minto, what have you learned? Like what would you do differently or what are you doing differently? What did you start to do and then you did a course correction? Or what do you wish you had known at the very beginning? Like what is that sort of learning journey for you going through this during the pandemic?

Amy Raven:

I think if I had a magic eight ball, what I would've done differently is I would have had this all done prior to a global pandemic. So that's what I would have done a little bit differently. I think what I would have done differently is pushed for this a little bit harder. Pushed for the understanding that the consumer was already in this journey and was wanting this. And I would have pushed for this a little bit harder, a little bit faster, for us to get it set up so that we weren't doing it because of a pandemic, we were doing it because it was what the consumer

wanted us to do. It was how the consumer wanted to purchase from us. I think I would've just pushed a little bit harder and said, "This is the road we need to go down and this is the road we need to go down today."

Steve Brown:

So you're already on this journey, Amy, and you've done amazing work. I applaud you. And I love the philosophy that you took when you went into this, which is, how do we honor that connection with our customers, keep that humanity in the connection, but use technology to support that and deliver it in new ways. As you look at what you've achieved already, which is a lot, and you look forward to your checklist of what are the next things you want to achieve, what are the next business problems that you want to solve using technology? What's next on your list and what are some problems that you're not quite sure how to solve yet that maybe we can help you think through today?

Amy Raven:

Yep. So I think I've taken a very hard look and focused on the process from the very beginning. So the process from someone looking at, "I want to go and stay at Minto Furnished Suites. How do I do that?" And from that process, where it needs to carry on and where I haven't spent a lot of time looking into is, now they've arrived on property, what's the easiest way to make them comfortable for their stay and they check in safely and all of those other key components now that they've arrived on site. So now that the paperwork is signed and the relationship is formed and everyone's happy and friendly from a sales perspective, how does it transition over to the operations team and how do you keep that flow going through to the operations team? And that's from your contactless check-ins or you're entering into your suits, with not having keys anymore, is really the biggest thing that's happening now. And how does that play into the whole virtual experience?

Steve Brown:

Are you thinking about using technology to deal with issue resolution? So I get into my suite and I need towels, or there's a maintenance problem, is that something that's next on the list? Or do you have that-

Amy Raven:

No, that would all fall under that as well. So it's all the operational side of it is the next big hurdle that we as a company need to tackle.

Steve Brown:

And are you thinking about personalization for your clients? So that if they like flowers or chocolates or they have allergies, that you can prepare, they can specify those things and deliver that when they first check-in?

Amy Raven:

Yeah and that's absolutely something that we've always tried to focus on. Whether it's, they want a fridge full of groceries when they arrive. Whether it's, they want to be picked up at the airport somehow. Whether it's, they love fresh bouquet of flowers every week. Those are all the kinds of things that you want to start to do. And I think that's even more important now today because you've lost that human connection in the way that we used to do things. You lost that human connection, so now when someone arrives and they told you that their favorite flower is peonies and there happens to be a bouquet of peonies sitting on their table, I think that's a huge wow factor and a great differentiating piece for you in the marketplace.

Steve Brown:

That's certainly made me want to come and stay at one of your places.

Brian David Johnson:

Well, that's a great transition. So let's take the spotlight off of Amy and let's flip it back onto Steve and myself, the two futurists. So Amy, we want to reciprocate, so you've got us here. How can we help? As Steve was saying, as you're thinking about your next steps, as you're thinking about moving forward, is there anything that we can help with? Do you have any questions for us?

Amy Raven:

Yeah, I mean, this goes back to the last podcast that I saw with you and Steve. Getting your businesses to talk about not necessarily today, because we're all in today and we all are putting our nose to the grindstone and figuring out today. How do you keep the conversations going so that you're always strategizing for what six months is from now, what 12 months is from now, or what 18 months is from now and getting those people on board? For example, Steve, how do you have those conversations about what do you want the personal experience to look like in 18 months from now? Is it going to be different than what it currently is today? How do you guys see that playing out?

Steve Brown:

I'll take a stab. So Brian and I call ourselves futurists and we do this for a living, but I think all business leaders, especially all change agents and strategists, need to think of themselves and think of the world through a futurist lens. So we deputize you all as futurists. And I think being a futurist is really about telling good stories, about an imagined future, and painting a path so that people, one, see themselves in that future and are excited to see themselves in that future, what it means for them, and that there's a clear path to get there.

Steve Brown:

So for me as a futurist, when I help my clients, what I do is, what's the time frame you want to think about? Is it two years, is it five years, is it 10 years? What does that world look like, what does that world feel like for people, and what's the benefit for those people in making the move from here to there? And then what does that roadmap look like? So if it's a five year transition, what does it look like three years from now, two years from now? What do we need to do next week to get us started on that journey? And then just keep checking in with people, reminding them about how exciting that vision is. And not just in terms of how is this good for the company or how is this good for customers, but how is this good for you as an employee? How will it affect you? The classic WIIFM, what's in it for me? If you can tell those stories and tell them often that's the best way to get people excited about making those journeys forward.

Brian David Johnson:

Yeah and I completely agree with Steve. It is about creating that story. Human beings are story believing machines and so telling that story and talking about it, it becomes kind of a currency that people kind of trade in. And it's important to tell that story and to talk about it.

Brian David Johnson:

I guess for me, I would also say you need to operationalize that. I think that's one of the things that's really important. When I see, and certainly when Steve and I see, really effective companies, they've done two things, they've operationalized it and they've made it a part of their culture. So by operationalizing it, is you need to give people the time and the permission and the platform just to talk about it. Like you said, just to talk about it, to tell that story. As Steve said, to talk about what do we do next week? What do we do next year? What do we do? And to keep having those conversations.

Brian David Johnson:

It's really kind of that muscle memory, if you will, where you're just kind of doing it and you just need the time and it needs to be on the agenda, it needs to take a moment. And people might say, "Oh, I have no ideas." And then you say, "Oh, that's awesome. Well, how do we get ideas," right? You kind of keep it going.

Brian David Johnson:

So one is operationalizing it and then the other is making it a part of your culture. And culture is both the hardest thing to do and the easiest thing to do. It's the easiest thing to do because culture basically is saying, "What do you value?" And then you reward what you value. So you need to value this type of thinking, and then you need to reward it. And that doesn't mean monetarily. That can just mean by saying, "Oh, that was great," or with enthusiasm or with volunteering to be a part of it. But that's the easy part.

Brian David Johnson:

Of course the hard part of culture is just the doing of it and initiation of it. And part of it is, yourself as an innovator and a change maker, you kind of have to push. There's an inertia. There's an inertia in all organizations because we've always done it this way. Like you said, with your contracts and with the way that all the business at Minto Furnished Suites had been done before, making that change is harder because you've always done it the previous way. Now to Steve's point, and what we've all talked about, the pandemic is a kind of great accelerator of that because there's a lot of things we just couldn't do anymore. So that actually loosened it up a bit.

Brian David Johnson:

And I would actually say when it comes to that culture change and that operationalization, I'm seeing a lot of people now, because they've been so disrupted say, "Oh, maybe we should be thinking about this. Maybe we should get prepared. Maybe we should start thinking about some possible scenarios of the way things might go." So I think you might be surprised actually, as you start to operationalize it and put it as a part of culture, you might get a little bit more leeway than you would in the past.

Amy Raven:

Excellent.

Steve Brown:

Brian, to add on to your point, the companies that will do best in the next five or 10 years are those who don't just react to this time and then think, "Phew, it's over," they actually make this part of their way of being, their way of doing, so that they use this to reinvent the way that they operate so that they continue. That momentum is just

carried through into the future and they continue to outpace their competition. Those that just react and then think, "Phew," they're not going to do so well.

Amy Raven:

Right.

Brian David Johnson:

So before we jump to the last section, three things to do and our big surprise, Amy, do you have any other questions for us?

Amy Raven:

No, I think I'm okay.

Brian David Johnson:

Okay. Well, thank you. Thank you so much for doing that and for telling that. And again, we're always a resource for you, I appreciate it, Amy. And again, Navigating the Noise, that's why we're here and as the viewers know as well, if you ever have any questions, any of these things come up, any of these issues, please reach out to us so that we can talk about them. But let's go to the three things to do.

Brian David Johnson:

So we always end every episode with three things to do. So these are the, what are the really pragmatic things that you can do today to prepare for tomorrow. I'll start and then I'll pass it over to Amy and then to Steve to see if they've got any.

Brian David Johnson:

So I'll start. And this is a bit kind of taking a cue from what Amy and what the folks over at Minto Furnished Suites did, is take this time to go deep. That's the first thing, go deep. Like think about it. We've all got a little bit more time on our hands. Certainly it's stressful, but we're not traveling, we're not driving into the office. Take that time that you might've been commuting into work, commuting into the office, and start thinking about who are you as an organization? What are you good at? What do people value? This is one thing that struck me, that Amy said, that's thinking, what are they really good at and then how do they enhance that? How do you take what people really value about you as an organization, and then make that better.

Brian David Johnson:

Now that could be making it better certainly through technology, like we were saying, there's a whole host of technologies out there, but it also could be just a process change. We've talked about this on the show in other episodes where it's thinking about your team, thinking about the organization of your team. Or like with Amy's question, how do you change the culture so that you state the thing that makes you really good, that people value you, it could be internally, your employees, or externally with your clients or customers.

Brian David Johnson:

And how do you make that stronger? So that as you come out of the organization, as you come out of this pandemic, that you are being a stronger organization internally, and you are meeting the needs, that idea, that

plethora of choice, not all choices, but that plethora of choices really surprising and delighting people. And I really think that starts with going deep and you've got the time. So I'd say start there.

Brian David Johnson:

So number one is go deep and now I'm going to pass it over to Amy. So Amy, what should number two be? What should people start doing today?

Amy Raven:

I think number two is tagging onto your time piece and finding those like-minded people in your organization to start having those great deep conversations. To start talking about, what does it look like? And it's not only an internal conversation I think you have to have, I think it's an external conversation as well. So reaching out to your client base and reaching out to your customers and saying, "What does life look like for you guys in six months, 12 months, 18 months? Like what are the conversations that you are having internally?" So that you can start to take those two pieces of the puzzle and put them together so that they layer on to one another, rather than thinking of everything inside your own bubble and inside your organization, taking the information from external sources and layering that on top of. Those would be my next steps, that's where I want to go. And I'm going to find those like-minded people to come along with me.

Brian David Johnson:

And you are jumping ahead, you already know the second thing to do and you're already going to start doing it, so that's great. All right, Steve, give us our number three. Bring us home.

Steve Brown:

So you've gone deep, you've built your coalition of people that are going to go on that journey with you. Then you've got to figure out where you're going to go and what you're going to do. And think longer term. So that would be the third thing I would do, is build your technology acumen, not learning about the bits and bytes of how artificial intelligence works, or the different mechanisms by which Blockchain technology works, I'm not talking about that. Understand how technologies can be used to solve real world business problems. And then try and figure out, what are the problems that you have and how are you going to solve them?

Steve Brown:

I realize I just printed out this thing, which I'm playing with. I'm going to put it up from the chart here. So it's a matrix. Thinking about the business problems you might want to solve here. So I need new products and services and experiences for my customers. I need new channels to reach them. I need to improve the experience for my workers. And then looking at the six different technologies that I think are the big ones to think about artificial intelligence, 5G and satellite, augmented reality, Blockchain, and others. And then looking at the intersection of those and thinking, "Okay, how do I use that for my business?"

Steve Brown:

So that's where I would go, is get smart on these technologies, understand what they can do to solve real world business problems, and then go after them one by one.

Brian David Johnson:

That's excellent. So those are your three things to do. Go deep, build a coalition, and look at technology, but not so much the technology itself, but the problem and the business problem that that technology can solve for you. Don't get lost in the bits and bytes and ones and zeros. Don't do that at all. So those are your three things to do.

Brian David Johnson:

So before I close this out and thank Amy and Steve, I mentioned we have a big surprise. And so we've been talking at CHPA and getting a lot of feedback from people like Amy, innovators. Probably folks who are out in the audience today, who are watching these things, who are hungry for this type of stuff, hungry for, very specifically, the work that Steve does. He works day in, day out thinking about innovation and thinking about these things.

Brian David Johnson:

So as innovators, as change-makers, let's be honest, sometimes in an organization it can be kind of hard. I mean, this is one of the things that Amy mentioned, is that it's tough. And plus we're in the middle of a pandemic and we're in the middle of some pretty massive social unrest. And so it's tough for people because there's a lot of pressure on them. There's a lot of business pressure, there's a lot of cultural pressure, there's family pressure. And so oftentimes you'll be met with that inertia. You'll be met with that kind of pushback inside of your organizations. But you, as a change maker, as an innovator, as somebody who's interested to do this, you might actually want to go and have these conversations and you can't find anybody to have those conversations with.

Brian David Johnson:

Well, when I heard that and when I was talking to Amy, I said, well, we can help. That's one of the things we can do here at Navigating the Noise and CHPA. So I went and talked to Mary Ann and I talked to the team at CHPA. And so what we're going to do is we're going to pull together an innovator's forum. We're going to pull together a forum, all the information will be on the website, you can go to the CHPA website, get all of that, I won't bore you with it here. But you'll actually have a place. Getting back to what I had said around how you make this type of thinking, how you institutionalize, you operationalize it. So we're actually going to do that. We're going to operationalize it here at CHPA.

Brian David Johnson:

So we're going to put out a place where innovators can get together. Not too many, we're not going to flood everybody in. So you can have real conversations. Talk about what you're doing, share. It's very good to share. It's really important. That's why it was so important to have Amy come on today to say, this is what we're doing. And then maybe put some problems out there or find out what other people are doing. It's just that type of area. When now we all can't get together at the conference, or we can't get together at regional conferences or even get together in our cities, but we can do this. And that's really one of the things we can do at CHPA and at Navigating the Noise, is have this innovators forum. So have a look at that, it'll be on the website, we'll get it scheduled.

Brian David Johnson:

Amy, it's all because of you that we're doing it. You're doing great work up in Toronto. We're really, really pleased. See, Steve's happy about it. But thank you so much for coming on and sharing. I know that can be

tough when your head's down doing this type of work. So thank you so much for coming on today, we really appreciate it.

Amy Raven:

Thank you very much for having me. It was a lot of fun.

Brian David Johnson:

Steve Brown. Show the book one more time, Steve. Big friend of the show, always really good, always game to come up and share this. If anybody has any questions for Steve, if anybody has any questions about the work that he's doing, go to the website, we can certainly connect you with Steve and get you innovating, get that work going. So again, Steve, thank you so much again for being on.

Steve Brown:

My pleasure. Glad to help and well done, Amy. Keep it up.

Amy Raven:

Thank you.

Brian David Johnson:

All right. I will close us out. Again, being the engineer. So again, thank you everybody for joining us for this episode of Navigating the Noise. As always, if you have questions, if you have issues, if you have further thoughts, things that you would like us to dive into, we're trying to be really nimble here, we're trying to be nimble during this time. We know there's a lot of noise and we're trying to help. So if you have any questions or if there's anything that we can do for you, please, please ask.

Brian David Johnson:

So as always, thank you for listening to Navigating the Noise, a podcast brought to you by CHPA, the Corporate Housing Providers Association. Please reach out and let us know if there's anything we can do, if there's anything you want to hear about. You can email us at info@chpaonline.org. You can follow us on Twitter at [@CHPAonline](https://twitter.com/CHPAonline) or you can visit the website at chpaonline.org. Again, I'm Brian David Johnson, your host, and your futurist saying, thank you so much for joining us and we'll see you again soon.