

Welcome to the Event Tech Podcast, where we explore the ever evolving world of event technology every week. This show is brought to you by Endless Events, the event AV company that doesn't suck. Now let's talk tech.

Brandt Krueger:

Hello everyone and welcome to this edition of the Event Tech Podcast, I'm Brandt Krueger, Will Curran from Endless Events is on assignment, so since he's not here to do the adjective generator, I went ahead and popped one open and apparently today I am the hungry Brandt Krueger from Event Technology Consulting. So glad to be here today because we are going to be talking about a product that I've known about for quite some time. If it blows my mind, how many people still don't know about the Catchbox. So today we're talking with Mikelis Studers from Catchbox, the CEO. I love it, he's got a short biography rather than the two paragraphs that we normally get. He says he's an engineer, turned product designer, turned CEO. All right, there we go, well, welcome Mikelis, thank you so much for joining us today.

Mikelis Studers:

Thanks for having me. Great to be here on the show.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, and it's a little late where you are. So I appreciate you dialing in, calling in from Latvia, this evening where it's a little after 10:00 PM your time. So thank you so much for staying up late with us.

Mikelis Studers:

Yeah, no worries, yeah.

Brandt Krueger:

Well, so we wanted to bring this up, this was one of Will's ideas originally, that he saw as he was working with the Catchbox through his work in AV Land. He saw a lot of people not really utilizing it to its fullest, just maybe toss it once out into the audience and go, "Okay, good, it's done." But before we get into the proper ways of using your Catchbox, let's take a quick step back, and

Mikelis if you can just walk us through both your story of how you went from an engineer turned Product Designer, turned CEO, and then specifically, how the Catchbox came about and how this product came about.

Mikelis Studers:

Right. Well this story is really of a bunch of guys, we were three guys in the beginning, we studied together in the University, it was in the Finland, in cold, black Finland, we were students and we noticed one really big problem with the studies as a study process, is the same as actually for events, it gets more and more interactive and inclusive in terms of we are progressing from the one way interactions where the guru in the front is just giving the information to the crowd, towards the discussion type to engagement type of setups.

Mikelis Studers:

We really noticed the technical problem there, that the current tools that were used for giving everyone turn to speak were really outdated and really clumsy, so we thought, how about we make it a little bit more fun using the existing technology like microphones, because very often you need something to reinforce the sound, to give a little more boost, Even if there are not that many people in the room, and also if you want to have some recording or things going on. So, we noticed that the tools are not really built with interaction in mind.

Mikelis Studers:

So we thought, hey, how about we throw the microphone? It sounded crazy back then, and then we started doing it, really applied for a few of the programs that support these kinds of early entrepreneurship ideas within university. It really is a story of from zero to something, we really didn't have any kind of specific background experience in events or in engagement of that sort apart from just like really a willingness to work out some technical products and turn it into something very useful.

Mikelis Studers:

That's the story now, the product has been picked up by many people, by many great companies, and being very happy with that so far.

Brandt Krueger:

Was throwing it one of the early ideas or were there some other things that you came with before that or was that pretty early on, and you ran with it?

Mikelis Studers:

Yeah, it was pretty early on, it just sounded such an absurd idea of too many sorts, right? That first of all how could you throw a microphone as is, right? So immediately there are so many limitations that just would not let that happen technically. Then we found out also culturally and we're still challenged by that today, how would people accept that kind of behavior, how do you use that kind of tool? How do you use it to the full potential and things like that. But yeah, that idea came pretty early on, yeah.

Brandt Krueger:

For anybody that hasn't seen it, it's a square cube, it's soft, it's foam, so even if it hit you straight on in the head, it really wouldn't hurt that much, which I've seen, and maybe the size of a soccer ball, a football depending on what country you're in. So, yeah, about that size, and it's got an actual microphone element in it that is cut off because of a gyroscope. Am I right on that?

Mikelis Studers:

Yes, technically, yeah. So basically from the physical standpoint, yeah, it's a cushioned cube shaped product, that agreeing on the safety was really, really a big concern in the early days of developing the product, we really run a lot of empirical testing in our own heads, to make it really into shape, and the cushioning level where everyone would be safe to use it, including kids in school for example, so it is lightweight, it posed a lot of challenges on the technical material choices, they really need to be self lightweight, and then having really durability properties.

Mikelis Studers:

Then you're right, yeah, so we also early on detected a problem that it wouldn't really work if the microphone made a sound when it dropped, drop the mic, what does it mean? We know what it means, but literally it would mean taking a huge impulse out of the loudspeakers, that's not that pleasant.

Mikelis Studers:

So we had to involve several sensors, and write some codes that runs inside the microphone all the time, that basically checks the state of the movement and cuts off the sound when necessary. Then the sound comes back on, whenever it is in the normal state, when it's just in the hands.

Brandt Krueger:

Right, so when you throw it, it doesn't make a bunch of noise, and then once you stop and it settles, you're able to talk into it again?

Mikelis Studers:

Yeah, exactly. As a user, you don't even really need to think about that, it just happens. We also happened to manage to patent this thing, so it turned out to be something that people haven't done before. So we solely hold the patent on this technology, a technological solution for microphone.

Brandt Krueger:

Okay. So now that we've caught everybody up that on the off chance, like I said, it always blows my mind that even though... So you guys have been out for what? About six years at this point?

Mikelis Studers:

Yeah, I would say maybe five, those very early days we started to... Those were like, we are selling the product somewhere around five years.

Brandt Krueger:

And it really took the industry by storm, I remember my Twitter feed being filled with Catchbox and then suddenly just magically appearing at almost every event I was on, anytime there was any kind of interactivity, the

Catchbox was being thrown around, again for folks that might not have seen it, it's brandable, so you can actually have it skinned with your logo and colors and all that good stuff. So, where I was going with that is that it still blows my mind that there are people that have never seen this thing, have never heard of it. So I'm glad we had a chance to go back and describe what it is for anybody that by any chance hasn't actually seen it in action.

Brandt Krueger:

Now to go to the core of what we wanted to talk about today, the obvious use case, right? Is as a Q&A mic, so we're just going to throw it out into the audience and use it. So take us through what's the best way, we wanted to get into the best practices, and really making the most out of your Catchbox. So I'm a company, and I've decided I'm going to invest in one of these, tell me how the best way I can make use.

Mikelis Studers:

Surely you need to have a clear goal of what you're trying to do, and it comes down to the things that I talked about before in the university context about the product obviously. There is a big challenge in companies to get ideas, or actual thinking or thoughts out of people's heads, and how do you do that, right? Let's say you have an all hands meeting, you have 30 to 50 to potentially hundreds of people spending about half an hour together. Think about the collective time spent or costs of that if you want to be looking from a finance point of view.

Mikelis Studers:

So you really want to have it running effective, and this is where Catchbox sometimes really handy, those moments when anyone has questions and there's that short moment when nobody does, but I'm 100% that so many people could comment, could contribute, could give their idea, their inputs for everyone to grow a little bit higher in reaching the common goal. This is where Catchbox comes handy, and it could be really an icebreaker and have that moment, and give that spark where those ideas could flourish really being told to everyone around.

Mikelis Studers:

So, yeah, but coming back to what you would really do when you decided to invest in a product, it pretty much comes down to, if it's the first time you're now getting the Catchbox, you get it branded, it's in your company's colors, it's really first of all, it's already like a part of your company, so you're already bringing in your corporate branding, so that's really one of the goals to blend in to deliver where it belongs to that company.

Mikelis Studers:

So you have that in your hand, and I think it starts really with a good introduction, and it takes approximately 10 seconds to show, you know guys this is a microphone, you can throw it, and it's soft, it's not going to hurt anyone even if it hits somebody in the head, no problem with that, really. Then just showing that whoever gets the Catchbox gets to speak up, and then doing that thoroughly, but doing it with first time imagining, like you would do it in front of pupils in a school, right? So you would need to explain. Yeah, and once you do that-

Brandt Krueger:

I think that's an important step, just step in here real quick because I want to emphasize that. When I see it fail is exactly then, when you're not taking just that 15 seconds, that 30 seconds to talk about it and explain it. So they just chuck it into the audience, say "It's a throwable microphone, go." So just taking that moment to hold it up and say, "This is the Catchbox, this is what it does, you still have to hold it like a regular microphone, so don't hold it at your belly button. Hold it up to your mouth so that we can actually hear you, and then, yeah, don't be afraid of it, give it a good chuck when you're ready to go, and yes, it's soft, it's not going to hurt." And then gently throw it into the audience yourself so that people can see it's safe. So yeah, just really making sure that you take the time to do that, I think is definitely one of the first steps.

Mikelis Studers:

Yeah, giving a short demo is what sums it up real nice if it's the first time. Of course once you get it going, we have heard success stories such that, once you passed certain moment in the organization you really, you can't understand how do you live without it. And that really warms our hearts pretty much here at Catchbox.

Brandt Krueger:

And I'll throw one of those in as well, because I've definitely heard that on the AV side. So I've been in a meeting for a fairly major financial company, and they were doing Q&A, and they did the usual two microphones on a stick out in the audience, and-

Mikelis Studers:

I think that's the worst intimidating one.

Brandt Krueger:

It's so, and that's a great point, I mean, it's so intimidating to people like, I've got to get up out of my chair, and so I want to come back to that, but just to finish this story, it was like a CMO, it was like a fairly high end executive at this major financial institution, and he just looked out and he was, why don't we have one of those throwable microphone things? So he had clearly seen Catchbox out in the wild, and was like, why are we doing this with the stupid two microphones? Why don't we have one of those throwable microphone things? So absolutely, gets into your mind.

Mikelis Studers:

Definitely, definitely, I can't agree more, and we were very aware of this challenge and I think part of that challenge is really that it's a group effort in the end of the day. There is the CMO who is at that moment a little bit frustrated, why don't we have such thing here, but then who is responsible for that? It's the AV guys, it's the moderators, it's the event organizer it's X, Y, Z person, not to play the blame game, I don't know, right? But somehow it needs to be part of the culture a little bit to be...

Brandt Krueger:

I always find that the best audience interactivity technology is the ones that get sticky, the ones that once you use it, you want to keep using it. So that was a perfect example that clearly he'd been on an event, where they had used a Catchbox and it was sticky, he wanted to be able to use it again. And the best audience interaction technology is that way, where you get addicted to it, because you're actually getting good feedback and you're getting good responses from the audience and not just crickets when you're asking for questions out there.

Brandt Krueger:

I want to come back to some of the other use cases, because the context that you and I are both batting around is this idea of the corporate event, right? Or maybe education, where you've got a big room full of people and a single person up front and you're tossing. Can you take a couple of steps back and tell us some more of the potential use cases for Catchbox?

Mikelis Studers:

Yeah, absolutely. So corporate events and let's say out of the building organized events, events with an AV in a venue that's like a very big part of it. So they might be organized by some third party organization or maybe by the company themselves just outside their premises, that's a very big part of that. Obviously another one is the events inside the company, and then you can get in all kinds of sizes, it could be all hands, or town hall meetings. All then really come down to smaller and smaller and smaller gatherings, which would be the training sessions would be one of the usual ones, and then what comes so interesting, all of these tend to, according to our knowledge about this, since marketing our customers, very often all of those ones gets streamed, and then you do need to have microphone, because that's how the sound gets picked up and passed to the computer, and that opens up a whole new avenue where I think we have a lot of work to do still to get some awareness out there that Catchbox is that tool that will let actually get the microphone closest to the sound source, which is the mouth of the person speaking.



Mikelis Studers:

Again, when you use it obviously, because there are all kinds of bunch of other solutions just like squishing around the laptop, or then these ceiling mic or like tile microphone system, which are really great, they're really advanced technologies that are trying to digitally detect where the person is and cancel the echoes, but those solutions, first of all not being very humane, lets say not humane like this moment that's maybe the right term, but they're digital, they're kind of cold in our point of view.

Mikelis Studers:

We have this very human centric BCR in your hands, so that's one aspect, the other one, they're very, very expensive, they tend to be really, really big investments, and then still companies do that. So, yeah, but we are talking about...

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, you bring up two really good points in there, maybe that's where you were about to go, so I apologize if I jumped on you, we've got a little bit of a lag as things bounce back and forth to Latvia. You brought up two great points, one is that this isn't just for big events, so we can bring it down smaller and smaller and smaller, and I've seen it used very effectively in small groups, where you're talking about a board room size thing, and rather than having to set a microphone at every station for a meeting, or having a single or two microphones that have to be passed around from person to person just to get a word in edgewise, it's really effective as just here, chuck it across the room, and it speeds the conversation up, and it makes it, again, just a little bit more fun.

Brandt Krueger:

The other thing that you brought up there that I think is really important, from an AV standpoint, and obviously that's where Will and I definitely exist in our corporate world, is anytime something's being live streamed or recorded, it's incredibly important to get those questions into a microphone. Unless you've

got a really, really aware speaker, presenter, or educator up there, that is always going to be good at repeating the questions that come in, because the natural reaction for almost everybody as if someone asks a question is to just respond to it. So while the presenter might have a microphone on, the person asking the question might not have gotten that into a microphone. So that makes a huge difference, because then you're getting either just the response, or you're getting the interpretation of the question being spoken back through the presenter.

Brandt Krueger:

So a huge point that you've got there about making sure that, anytime you're recording or live streaming, anything you can do to increase the likelihood that those questions are going to be sent into a microphone and then sent either to the live stream or to the recorder is enormously helpful.

Mikelis Studers:

Absolutely, and I think very nice sentence from you, increase the likelihood of that thing passing through the microphone, then mentioned there is a computer, where our work is to decrease that friction, which means also increasing likelihood that really that sentence, that speech from that person gets in the mic.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, nothing's perfect, you're never going to get someone who is truly an introvert to ask their questions. That's why it's probably a good idea, and this is, I would say another way that you can make the most of your Catchbox, is that the Catchbox isn't the only option, that's when you combine the Catchbox with some other audience engagement technology, whether that's a mobile app where you can ask anonymous questions, or some people really like the two microphones on a stick because it's their moment in the sun. So it's okay to have those other technologies in addition to the Catchbox to again increase the likelihood that you're going to be able to hear from everyone, it's another tool in the toolkit.

Mikelis Studers:

Oh, definitely, definitely. That's definitely how we see the world merging here. I wanted to comment also on let's say these other audience engagement methods, like polling, there are really nice apps out there that you can use, and I've seen really effective outcomes when you combine, let's say the elegance Polling on screen, live, online with Catchbox and I've heard feedback from these moderator guys, it's really effective to ask specific question and gather stats, or opinion, or what's the mood in the audience, but then when you want that human touch, that opinion, that why, and go a little bit more deep, then maybe those tools reach their limitations, then Catchbox comes handy right in that moment.

Mikelis Studers:

So again we come down to the moderator who needs to have that vision and needs to actually use those tools effectively.

Brandt Krueger:

Any other use cases we haven't covered so far?

Mikelis Studers:

Sure. Yeah. So, from technical point of view, obviously this live sound at the event and then capturing the sound for streaming, those are the two things that are there, not like mutual exclusive, they as I said oftentimes happen at the same time, but when we look more about the context or the environment, definitely the education is it the school, K-12 or universities? All of that they have very similar types, you can think of a lecture or a class of being an events, right? It's very similar to what's going on, the goals are maybe a little bit different, and the context, the audiences, the crowd is a little bit different in each case. Then the problems are still like the lecture capture as well, very similar things streaming, right? It's just being recorded, so that context is definitely a big, big part of Catchbox, where a Catchbox is being used.

Mikelis Studers:

Then what's really interesting is, another thing that we've seen is actually the houses of worship, churches and congregations, they do use Catchbox for their chosen and they also talk, right? So that's maybe even more niche, but another context that we have found our products going to.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, I mean really anytime if you think about it, I guess that's not that surprising to hear about houses of worship, because anytime you're wanting to get reactions, testimonials from out in the audience in a way that's easy to move quickly so that you're not having to wait for mic runners or anything like that, any type of situation where you just want to do that and have a little fun certainly sounds like an opportunity to use the catch box.

Brandt Krueger:

Are there any other, I want to get into, because you guys have been upgraded, you didn't just release it and be done with it, you've got some newer upgrades, and some new things that you're working on, and I want to get into that, but before we move on from the uses of the Catchbox, are there any other things that you really want people to make sure that they do to make sure that they're getting the most out of the Catchbox?

Mikelis Studers:

Well as I mentioned we really should look into the option to, when getting the Catchbox to customize it to fit your own brand or event theme, that's really easy to do, since the customizable part is separable from the technology, you can really invest in technology that's the most expensive part of everything, and then get the covers as that's our name of the outside of the product, and you can get the cover separately customized later, but I think that as I said, it definitely comes down to thinking a little bit about the company culture or the organizational culture, and that's why I think talking about the houses of worship, what you will get is reinforced group feeling, the group cohesion, because when you want to share, almost they're sharing the mic as well or sharing the Catchbox around like throwing or passing or hand to hand, is like

an act of a group coming together and doing something together. Very, very little obviously it's like such a subtle act but it is.

Mikelis Studers:

Which means also I think the Catchbox is a perfect tool if you want to change your company culture towards that, or your organizational culture towards that, towards sharing, towards more fun.

Brandt Krueger:

More fun?

Mikelis Studers:

Growing as a group. As well, fun and play is a big part of that, big part of that. Obviously, just that act and even if it drops on the floor, 99% of cases I've seen it's laughter what happens, and it definitely, immediately, it immediately sets the mood.

Brandt Krueger:

As you went back to the idea of the houses of worship, it brought something to mind that we haven't brought up yet, and that is, I thought I used to have this vision in my head then of pews and having people not easily being able to get up and move around. So that's another opportunity that anytime you've got a situation where you're in a theater or just really tight seating, just having those two microphones on a stick in the isles can be really inconvenient and difficult to get out of your chair and get past people. So anytime you've got a situation like that, I think theaters are a great example of an opportunity to use a Catchbox because especially when the raked seating, and wide open, not only again can it be fun, but it's a much more practical way to get microphones around and into the interior of those types of seatings in a venue.

Brandt Krueger:

So I just kind of, while you were describing that, I was like, oh yeah. And then the other thing that I don't think we should gloss over is accessibility, right? So not everybody is going to be able to scoot down to a microphone on a stick,

either they've got a mobility issues, or they're in a wheelchair, or something along those lines, could really make it difficult. So once again, any opportunity to remove a barrier from getting someone's opinion is usually a good one when we talk about this type of technology.

Mikelis Studers:

Definitely. Yeah, definitely. Tight seating arrangements, yeah, all the things you mentioned for sure. Those are opportunities.

Brandt Krueger:

Well, like I said, as I hinted a little bit earlier, you guys haven't just been resting, so why don't you tell us about some of the products that you've more recently come out to add to the Catchbox line?

Mikelis Studers:

Certainly. Well, our work is about understanding how the product can be also integrated into the technologies that organizations use these days. There's even the whole integrator industry, right? That's exact name of what these guys are doing, and we have the whole shows like INFOCOM and I see you're talking exactly about that, and working towards that. So, our latest product line which we launched just last year is called Catchbox plus, and this is one of the products that is target the versatility, so it has a bunch of interesting accessories, from the outside for the user point of view, it's still Catchbox, it's same cube shaped, soft throwable microphone, that you get as a part of this wireless microphone system.

Mikelis Studers:

But in addition, you get you really need things, for example we have chargeable batteries inside this product, inside the Catchbox Lite, and we have the wireless charger for it. So we saw a lot of problem in the practice, like with depleting batteries or like just batteries that needs to be changed. Again maybe for events that are used to having an active management, the person managing all the AV because that's a very big part of the event, right? In environments like corporations, again, you see a trend of less and less

maintenance like scalability and sometimes also cutting the cost in the budgets, you need to get to a point where there's zero maintenance set up. This really comes possible with Catchbox Plus because you just have the wireless charger pad, which you can buy optionally with our product, put it on the table and leave it there, when you pick it up, it's already hooked up to your audio system with your hangouts, your Skype, to your computer or whatever, and starts working. So that's part of that.

Mikelis Studers:

Another handy accessory for the same Catchbox Plus line, here's the Presenter mic, which is basically beltpack mic, beltpack, form factor of a microphone, and it also has a built in microphone, so you can use it as audio enhancement device, audio reinforcement, and just use it that way and then it can connect simultaneously two of the microphones to the same receiver. In this case you can have a throwable microphone for the audience, and then the Presenter mic for the person in front, be it the educator, be it a teacher, professor, presenter, trainer, speaker, anyone.

Mikelis Studers:

So, that's what we have been doing lately. Then we were ranking really short, like all the audio connectivity and the ways you can actually implement it into your existing audio setup work really smooth. So we have balanced audio outputs, USB audio outputs that work simultaneously, so you can immediately have the live audio feed, have the digital audio feed into your computer and things like that. But that's when you go really technical-

Brandt Krueger:

So I've got a, I just want to, for my own selfish purposes, I've got the traditional Catchbox that just had the double A batteries, and the magnetic centered section, and the small receiver, would that Presenter mic strap into that receiver, or is that only with the Plus line?

Mikelis Studers:

So I suppose you have the Catchbox Lite, that one or do you have... We have three products, advertised the Catchbox Plus, the one that-

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I don't remember which one is it like I said it's the one that's just got the batteries and that it's got the single receiver with the power and the volume and the quarter inch Jack on the back.

Mikelis Studers:

Yeah. So that one would be Catchbox Lite. So that's really our... Simplest way you can get throwable microphone type of system. So that's our-

Brandt Krueger:

I vouch for that. It's really plug and play, and so it's a simple receiver with a couple of antennas on the back, like I say, it's got a quarter inch Jack in the back that you can run into basically any... You're in a breakout session, or something like that, you can run that right into whatever they're using for the sound, whatever mixture they're using for the sound, and then boom, you've got a Catchbox. So absolutely vouch for the simplicity of that.

Mikelis Studers:

Definitely. I totally see that as being a product of choice for the setups like you just described, and that's something where you really, that's really targeted also for people inside organizations that they really see the problem, but they're not the tech guys, right? So because the tech guys also they don't necessarily are concerned with this audio engagement problem, they're very concerned with the tech side, with the AV, everything works, will it work? We'll need to maintain, how often do I need to change the batteries? Those kind of things, but the emotional problem I'd say is so much more in the heads of the personnel who think about engagement.

Mikelis Studers:

Then there are those, I guess the weird guys, as you, right? Who are like actually know both of the sides and can really see the pain points of both, and



yeah, for that really we have this really simple solution, it's usually we don't have all the bells and whistles on that one, but it still is a legitimate wireless microphone system.

Mikelis Studers:

Obviously Brandt we have the third product which is Catchbox module, which basically again from outside is exactly the same as from user standpoint exactly the same interaction, throwability, et cetera, but you plug in or put in the product, you plug in the existing belt like microphones from the usual microphone brands out there, the Shures or the Sennheisers, or -

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, for your true audio snob and you want to make sure you're using exactly the microphone you want to be using, then that's an option as well. I love this idea of the wireless charging mat, because especially in an educational situation where maybe that microphone lives in that room, I love the idea that it's just over sitting on a wireless mat until you need it. Then you're able to just pick it up and go, am I understanding that correctly? That's how that works?

Mikelis Studers:

That's exactly how it works, we have also one of our design philosophy is really to have only the things that are really necessary. So our product from outside, there is no buttons, there is no on, off, volume, there are those controls, don't get me wrong, but then you are the guy who sets up the product, who fiddles with that, right? For the user it's really pick and go, just pick it up and speak. And similarly for the wireless charger it just is just that, you put it on it, and it's this dedicated shave, dedicated design really beautiful, and then it just shows you how much the batteries have been charged, and that's it. There's again, no audio on, off thing, you pick it up.

Brandt Krueger:

Still have my mind racing to the rest of AV, I imagine a world where you've got the the audio guy in backstage with all of the beltpacks just laying on a

wireless charging mat, I think that would be awesome, you'd never have to worry about changing out the batteries halfway through a show, they're just sitting there charging. So how do we get everyone to do this?

Mikelis Studers:

Sure, yeah. No, well it's a lot about also talking about the control, sometimes you want to be in control, that's why if we could build one product line, it would be great, we would do that, but honestly there is like a really different needs for different setups and that's what differentiate these things. Sometimes you want to be in control and really be controlling your RF, your batteries, your everything, your frequencies, and managing that actively because either just because or usually there's a really big need, and sometimes you really want to be, you don't give me a trouble microphone.

Brandt Krueger:

Mikelis, what's the future hold for crowd mics? I don't know if you're able to give us at least a sneak peek, a window into what the roadmap might have. I know a lot of people hold that close to the vest, but if there's anything you're able to, or willing to share about what kind of the next, what the future holds for crowd mics. I'm sure our listeners would appreciate it.

Mikelis Studers:

Well, yeah, what really we're doing is making easier and easier to do, there's like a really big effort on our R&D team to-

Brandt Krueger:

I think I said proud mic I'm if I said crowd mic, I apologize, either that or I certainly get my things mixed up and if I didn't, then I don't apologize.

Mikelis Studers:

Okay. Okay. Yeah. So now our lead path, we really going towards like, easier and easier integrations, I said we're like testing more and more features that, when it comes to real world deployment, it's when we're talking about these universities that you just mentioned, right? or bigger corporations that want to

put into smaller and smaller rooms, there are those tech barriers that they just need to have in order to get to this little maintenance or zero maintenance setups or, yeah. Those are pretty nitty gritty details I'm sure, I don't think we need to go into that very much, but we're talking things about like networking, like remote monitoring device, which look very interested. Just things we're looking into, and obviously also the sound itself, and making it more suitable for meeting rooms and things like that.

Mikelis Studers:

But otherwise that's as I said, we have this kind of portfolio that tries to cover as much as possible, from the existing industry standpoint, and then developing each of those lines like even deeper. So the pro guys will get more pro features, the sinifer guys will get even the simplest product, value prop will get like even simplified if we can, and then the versatile-

Brandt Krueger:

Well, that's another huge point as you're dealing with education markets and things like that, more and more of the AV is moving to network, so AV over IP and using the infrastructure that's there, is going to be important, just like now, you guys are easily able to strap into existing mixer boards, in future I'm sure you want to be able to strap into existing audio, visual infrastructure, in those types of environment.

Brandt Krueger:

Okay. Well as we start to wrap up, I want to ask you a couple of the questions that we'd like to ask all of our guests on Event Tech Podcast, first of all is, so tell us something that's the craziest thing or a fun fact about you, something along those lines, something that people wouldn't expect out of an engineer, turn product designer, turn CEO.

Mikelis Studers:

Well, yeah, I guess been always attracted by microphones, that's really, it could as well be obvious, but for some reason I remember just my grandpa's house, he used to be a principal of a school, so he had those very almost

telecom microphone that he used for some sort of intercom system inside the school, so he had speakers in the classrooms and he had that, but I remember as now very vividly that it didn't have the connectors. So I thought like, oh, this is a very nice looking microphone, it's a really interesting piece of technology, it has this stand and then this head, but it didn't have the connectors, so I started playing around with that and soldiering something or attaching, connecting some to that, and I think I almost blow our house down back then because I tried to plug it into the outlet and then sparks and whatever, and the security probably went off, so I had to explain myself why I'm doing that.

Brandt Krueger:

Unless an engineer was born.

Mikelis Studers:

Yeah, exactly. So there's definitely like the fun-

Brandt Krueger:

Some of those old microphones are works of art, I mean, just so beautiful and ornately done, and then they had to be so big because of the cartridges that were in there, or the elements that were in there, it's crazy. All right, great, so the other question that we'd like to ask is what's something else? So not about what we're talking about today, what's some other technology, whether it's event technology, or doesn't have to be, it could be anything that's inspiring you or exciting you these days. What's something in the technology world that's really inspiring?

Mikelis Studers:

For me definitely it's the energy field, and it's the fusion nuclear power that few guys are developing now, as we're doing the fishing at the moment, and we know the problems of that. Now what's really exciting for me is the fusion nuclear power, that's I think part of the story and why it's interesting for me is because it's just so far away, still we're so technologically advanced as a world these days or we think so, but still people can anticipate this technology

being up and running like in 50 years time maybe. But the effect on the world that it will have is just so enormous that usually when I think about that.

Brandt Krueger:

Well, people are very nervous about nuclear power and rightly so, and especially anybody who's watched the HBO Mini Series on Chernobyl, but I think what people have to understand is the technology has come so far from the 1950s, 1960s technology of those types of nuclear reactors that we really need to keep an open mind on this when we start talking about things like clean energy. This is a whole different subject for a whole different podcast, but I'm glad that you brought it up, because it's something that I feel doesn't get talked about enough, that you can't just discount the nuclear power of the 1960s, compared to the plants and the technology that they've got today.

Brandt Krueger:

If anybody wants to go down an internet rabbit hole, look up lfttr nuclear power, I think it's L-F-T-R, technology. It's the kind of thing that runs exactly the opposite of a standard nuclear power plant so that if you stop feeding it water and all of that kind of stuff, it just stops, so there's no possibility of a meltdown, it just... So the problem with the meltdown is it constantly needs water, and it needs electricity and all the things that again, if anybody hasn't watched the HBO special, it's worth a watch on the Chernobyl accident. But these new technologies are the opposite of that, where if things shut down, it shuts down on its own, the reaction just stops and it doesn't melt down.

Brandt Krueger:

So kind of a side project, but I'm glad you brought it up because it's definitely something that Nerd should be looking into, and ordinary people should be looking into as well, to maybe get over the knee jerk fear when we talk about nuclear power. All right, anything else that you want us to talk about? Anything you want us to know about Catchbox? Maybe let us know where people can find out more about what you're up to.

Mikelis Studers:

Definitely this is [catchbox.com](http://catchbox.com), that's the place where you can find us online, and obviously we try to post lot of fun, personal stuff that we see with our clients in our social media channels, especially Instagram as well as youtube and Facebook, Twitter, because we just see so much inspirational stuff that people do with our products, that it's just so worth sharing honestly that gets us pumped up, and we feel the obligation to share it up to the world too, so please go and check it out.

Brandt Krueger:

All right, well Mikelis Studers, CEO of Catchbox, thank you so much for joining us today.

Mikelis Studers:

Thanks Will, thanks for having me.

Brandt Krueger:

All right. And so I thank you all for listening out there, this is [eventtechpodcast.com](http://eventtechpodcast.com), thank you so much for joining us today, be sure to stop by the website there. Then you can see the show notes, you can see the links to any resources we shared, the transcripts of the things that we've been talking about today, you can find the links to subscribe in your favorite podcast app, iTunes pocket cast, Google play, whichever one floats your boat. And we want to know what you think, so be sure and contact us, use the hashtag [#eventtechpodcast](https://twitter.com/eventtechpodcast), or you can reach right out via the old email [eventtechpodcast@helloendless.com](mailto:eventtechpodcast@helloendless.com), we'll be monitoring that as well.

Brandt Krueger:

Thank you so much for listening, thank you so much for joining us, we'll see you next time on the Event Tech Podcast.

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Event Tech, out.