

Kasie Whitener ([00:03](#)):

Welcome back to More Impact. I'm Kasie Whitener. In this episode, we listen in on a live interview between Dr. Jeff Savage and Aaron and Candice Hark, University of South Carolina alumni and married founders of Maxient, a conduct software company. Not sure what conduct software is. Don't worry, they'll explain. Dr. Savage has helped along by recent USC alum Caroline Byrd, whose senior honest thesis was to record the speaker series in order to create a podcast. The entire Maxient interview can be found on the Faber Center's channels. Here, the first 25 minutes of our conversation with our Proving Ground sponsors, Aaron and Candace, Hark of Maxient. Enjoy.

Dr. Jeff Savage ([00:41](#)):

Thank you for coming. Just do some quick introductions. So myself, Dr. Whitener and Joel, the Man Stevenson. We are the, the Faber Center. We also have Dirk Brown from McNair. Thank you Dirk, for supporting us. Really happy you're here. Happy to have the Harks here. This is a live interview podcast, Aaron and Candice. Thank you for coming. Can you give us just a quick, what is Maxient? And then we'll kind of go back and do a deeper dive into how this all got started.

Aaron Hark ([01:14](#)):

Oh, okay. Can y'all hear me okay? Mm-Hmm, <affirmative>. So Maxient is a what's called software as a service. So it's an online records keeping system that you, you access through the web and colleges and universities use it to maintain records of student behavior overall. And actually, we, we should probably say just general behavior. So we'll start with something, you know, really simple. I, I don't want a show of hands, but certainly if any of you have ever gotten in trouble for anything on this campus and you've gotten a letter from, I think it's the Office of Student Judicial, judicial Student Judicial Programs, the Office of Judicial Affairs, student Conduct, something like that. Those letters are sent through Maxient, all the, I see. Some laughs. So some of you have. So tho those letters are sent through Maxient. That's a software product that they use to not just to do the letters, but to receive reports, to maintain all the records that they have to keep on their side.

Aaron Hark ([02:06](#)):

Because in addition to things for the school, there's things that the government wants as well about overall behavioral issues at college campuses. Our product has morphed quite a bit. It started focused purely on those student discipline matters. It has grown into things that are more tangential discipline, like academic integrity. All Title IX related issues are in there. And then overall student wellbeing. So for people who aren't at all affiliated with the college or university, a lot of times I'll say we're like an electronic medical record is to the healthcare profession, except it's for student life, student issues at a college.

Dr. Jeff Savage ([02:41](#)):

How did you get started in that? Like the initial I, do you remember that idea form?

Candice Hark ([02:46](#)):

So, we initially re recognized the opportunity. We were working in the Office of Student Digital Programs. We were students, we were on the Student digital council, we were RAs and we saw how they were running their system and it was all paper based. And Aaron is a year older than me. He graduated and wanted to hang around for a year while I was finishing up. So he started a graduate program and was doing his graduate internship in that office hearing cases. And so we got like a very up

close intimate look of what this office was doing, and we could really see how it was disconnected that somebody hearing a case on one side of the campus wouldn't know what was happening on the other side. And the student could actually play that system. So sorry, we closed that loophole <laugh>, but you really could say to one professor, oh, this is the first time this has ever happened, I promise.

Candice Hark ([03:29](#)):

And over here, this is the first time this ever happened, I promise. And there was not a centralized record keeping system. So we were able to, to recognize that. And Aaron has a degree in computer science and he's like, I think I can write something for this. I'm a self-taught programmer. So we got together and decided, let's, let's try it out. So we ended up leaving the university. We didn't build it while we were here, but we left and we got real jobs and the real world I was working, I have a biology degree, so I was working, cutting the heads off of flies in a lab as a research tech. Like that was a really exciting job, but it paid good money <laugh>. So I was doing that. And Aaron was actually working in IT at UT Health Science System

Aaron Hark ([04:07](#)):

Down in Houston. Yeah, in

Candice Hark ([04:07](#)):

Houston. And you wanna talk about what you maybe learned there? Well,

Aaron Hark ([04:11](#)):

Yeah, I can talk about that more later. But basically so we, we started building it kind of on the nights and weekends. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative> you know, I, I was, I was getting firsthand experience of what it worked, what it meant to work directly in an IT environment. We knew that there was this problem we thought we could solve back at South Carolina. And so worked our day jobs, evenings and weekends. Instead of going out, we're building this product with the idea that it would help an office that we formerly worked in an office that, mind you, when we left, told us they were not particularly interested in any modernization. It was run by an attorney who's a very dear friend of ours at this point in time, but he really loved papers. And it was, as a graduate student, there were many times we would walk in and, and the project for the day was to move file cabinets from one room to another on the other end of the suite because he had decided to reorganize.

Aaron Hark ([04:56](#)):

And so we we, we said, Hey, we came back. We're like, this would make your life a little bit better. We've built this product, it takes all the triplicate forms that you were doing in the office, and you don't need them anymore. You're just, your people who are meeting with students are gonna put this in on the screen. It's gonna produce the letters for you that they were otherwise having to type up from your notes. And so they gave it a try and it worked, it worked really well for their office. And so one of the other USC campuses at the time it was USC Spartanburg, it's now called USC Upstate had come down to Columbia to just visit in the office. They saw the product, they said, we would really like to have that too. That would be great for us.

Aaron Hark ([05:32](#)):

So we said, alright, we'll try it there too. And we charged them just a little bit to use it. And then we went to a conference a, a judicial affairs conference for, for colleges and universities administrators

doing this. And set up as an exhibitor, showed some people what it looked like, learned that there were competitors in the market. And we ended up, after we left that conference, we got two different customers in the, in the months that followed. One of them was Embry Riddle Aeronautical University. They, they were very interested in the product. They had suffered storm damage, I believe from a hurricane or a tornado. Tornado tornado. A tornado on their campus had taken out one of their student affairs buildings. And so they knew the value of records.

Candice Hark ([06:15](#)):

Yeah.

Aaron Hark ([06:15](#)):

<Laugh>. So they knew the value of not having stuff in those file cabinets. And then Tulane University later said that they were very interested and they had they had one time funds right after Katrina. And they said, we like this, we'd like to just pay you for it for five years up front. And

Candice Hark ([06:31](#)):

We said yes.

Aaron Hark ([06:31](#)):

So yeah, so we, we went out to a very nice dinner that evening, very, very nice. Relatively speaking. And we're like, you know, we, we might be able to make a living doing this. Like

Candice Hark ([06:40](#)):

We were still working our jobs. Yeah. At this point we had moved to Virginia, we were shooting weddings Yeah. To make ends meet and other kind of odd stuff. But we like, I guess your second entrepreneur ex example there, we did not wanna take outside investment and we didn't wanna put everything on a credit card. So we worked really hard all the time, <laugh>.

Aaron Hark ([06:59](#)):

So when Tulane was willing to send that check, we said, Hey, there's, there's a possibility here, and we can use this to grow this further. And kind of went off from there. Yeah.

Candice Hark ([07:08](#)):

Yeah.

Caroline Byrd ([07:08](#)):

So you guys had just recently graduated. We're continuing to work on the software, but your ideal customer comes to you and says they're not interested in modernization. So what kind of keeps you going at that point? Like when your customer base isn't really interested in the, the thing that you're working on, but what keeps you going and what are your family and friends thinking of you at the time of time?

Candice Hark ([07:27](#)):

Yeah.

Aaron Hark ([07:28](#)):

So I would say that what I think what kept me going was the idea that that ideal customer was just wrong. They didn't know <laugh>. And I believe that, that they were an end of one at that moment. <Laugh> <laugh>. And there were other customers out there who were gonna know better. Family. it's funny, my family was very supportive of the notion of entrepreneurship couched within the idea as a side gig. And I, I say this, I'm very close with my family. I, I, I give my dad a lot of credit from my understanding of business from a very early age. But I think he believed in business as a side gig to a more stable occupation. So that was, you know, he, he saw a lot of folks around him who were doctors and lawyers and, and other things. He's like, do that and do this other thing if you want to. So I, it, it was really weird that I, it I think later in life, I'm like, I became the entrepreneur that you taught me to be <laugh>. So

Candice Hark ([08:19](#)):

Yeah. 'cause He was entrepreneurial. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. And you were a teacher and then would also do for photography and, and some other things, and then coin collecting

Aaron Hark ([08:26](#)):

Dealt coins. Yeah. Yeah.

Candice Hark ([08:27](#)):

And so, I mean, I think he accidentally turned you into an entrepreneur. But my, my family was, I think my family was hesitant. I'm an only child. And so all the eggs in one basket, <laugh>. But at the same time, they trusted me. I, I had always been a great student. I had not made a lot of mistakes up to that point. And I was like, I'm just, give me a minute. I'm gonna try this <laugh>. And they, and they did. I was, we were lucky that we had supportive families like that.

Dr. Jeff Savage ([08:52](#)):

This may be going backwards, but I'm interested in how

Dr. Jeff Savage ([08:54](#)):

The biology major figures out coding and like, how did that, how did the, because that's a big deal. So how did you Yeah,

Candice Hark ([09:01](#)):

Yeah.

Dr. Jeff Savage ([09:01](#)):

<Laugh>, how did you kind of dive in and pick up that skill and how did that, what did that process look like?

Candice Hark ([09:05](#)):

It's just what I needed to do. Right. I think that's part of, you know, what I think drives people, entrepreneurs like, you do what you need to do. You, you just get it done. Do the work. You know, you've heard all those, those kind of cliches. But at the time, I just wanted to be involved and I love biology. I still love it. And you know, keep up with it on the side. If I could go back, I would love to have

had a computer science degree. So I just picked up some books and just kept reading. And I had a good teacher whenever I had a question I would ask him. And so that was what I needed to do to be a part of the business. So I just did it.

Caroline Byrd ([09:36](#)):

Were there any resources or mentors that you guys leaned on from University of South Carolina along the way in creating this software?

Candice Hark ([09:43](#)):

A hundred percent. Yeah.

Aaron Hark ([09:44](#)):

Absolutely.

Candice Hark ([09:45](#)):

One right over there. Dean Kress. Dean Kress. You wanna talk about how you met Dean?

Aaron Hark ([09:49](#)):

When I, I, I'm one year ahead of Candy and so I graduated from computer science and then wanted to stick around. I told my dad, I was like, I'm gonna go. Candy mentioned shooting weddings earlier. We were photographers, we both were photographers for the Gamecock. We love doing that on the side. And so I told my dad when I graduated, I was like, I'm just gonna take a job with the state newspaper as a photographer for a year. And he had done that years before and his life, he's like, don't do that. I know it's fun. I know you'll enjoy being on the sidelines, you know, on Saturdays. But he's like, that's, that's not getting you where you need to go. He is like, if you're gonna be there for another year, find a master's program you should get into.

Aaron Hark ([10:22](#)):

And I, so I, I spent some time looking at, I spent a lot of time thinking, and what I really wanted was to get an MBA. But I, I read the, I read the requirements very literally. You had to have two years work experience, which I did not have. And so I did the next best thing, which was I went into the MPA program, which we like to joke that we just don't worry about the bottom line. We just spend, it's, it's government, it's professors in the room, get that joke. So so I, I did an MPA and did my electives in the Moore School. And so my my very first elective small business and entrepreneurship with Dean Kress and Richard Robinson. And it was a great class. It was, it was, it was everything that I was looking for out of 36 credit hours or whatever the masters is.

Aaron Hark ([11:01](#)):

But, you know, I was only able to have it for electives. And so did that, did a consulting project with them and learned a lot about what are probably fairly basic business concepts, but are really critical. And one that comes to mind is that I remember them imparting one day this, this notion of focusing on your outcomes of your business as opposed to your literal outputs. And the example that was used, I think was some work with Laid Law Environmental, and the idea that we're not just, we're not just taking away garbage. We're making this community safer. We're cleaning up these things. And, and I just remember the way it was, it was explained. I was like, I get that, like that resonates with me. And in

terms of how you promote a product and explain what you're doing, that's just, that was like, I think I was like 20 minutes of one course one day. But I learned a lot there and, and became friends with, with Dean and, and Richard. And they've been, they were, have been informal advisors to us with our company ever since. So we've been doing this, I guess roughly 20 years and they've, yeah, maybe four years into Maxient. I was talking about how things were going and I was like, I wonder, should we be selling this company?

Candice Hark ([12:00](#)):

We had 40 clients. Yeah. I think

Aaron Hark ([12:01](#)):

We had 40 clients. And Dr. Robinson is like, wait a minute, tell me about this company again.

Aaron Hark ([12:05](#)):

And we're, we're talking. He is like, I know a friend who wants to get a, wants a company, wants to buy a company for his son. Like that sounds like a fabulous, but I don't think I'd sell it right now. But if you want Yeah, we'll, we'll get rid of that right

Candice Hark ([12:17](#)):

Now. <Laugh>. Yeah. And so for perspective, we now have over 1300 clients. Yeah. Like there was definitely room find <laugh>.

Aaron Hark ([12:25](#)):

So yeah. The, the Moore School's been pretty influential all the way.

Dr. Jeff Savage ([12:29](#)):

What are some of the maybe missteps or what were some of the harder things as you were getting it started? Obviously you had that post Katrina Tulane big Win, but that's only, you know, takes you to three or four, right?

Candice Hark ([12:41](#)):

Yeah, yeah. When you're building a company like this, you don't always build knowing where it's gonna end up. So you make some choices and some decisions 'cause they make sense of the time, but then later on you're like, ah, I wish we'd done it differently. So, you know, we didn't build the software to scale to the scale that we are at now initially. And, and had we known we would've been this big, maybe we would have. But on the other hand, those choices were made because we needed speed. We needed to get to market quickly. And so in some respects, I regret some of 'em, but, but I do understand why we made the choice. So those are not necessarily things I would do over again, differently. Yeah.

Aaron Hark ([13:16](#)):

I would, I would add to that. So like, I think when we started the business, we took a whole lot of time working with just a handful of early clients to kind of figure out what the, what the product should look like, how it should be customized, and to try to understand kind of how to build out as opposed to going to market quickly and gaining more market share. The result of that was that we had some competitors who were able to get more of a foothold early on. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And so we spent later years

sort of winning back those customers in the marketplace. Ultimately we won them back. We're far and away the largest product in our marketplace. There was time spent early on, you know, some might have made a different decision. They might have said, I think it maybe makes more sense to go to market with a bit more of an imperfect product and grab more of the market share and then use those resources to, to pump it up.

Candice Hark ([14:01](#)):

Yeah. 'cause we were refining for many years and we got to the first conference we went to, we're like, oh yeah, we just signed with five years. That other guy over there, I'm like, oh man, we are hosed

Aaron Hark ([14:11](#)):

<Laugh>. Yeah. We, we definitely, we walked outta there thinking, man, we kind of missed the boat on this one. Maybe we, we waited a little too long. Turns out we didn't. In time, it made sense. Yeah.

Caroline Byrd ([14:19](#)):

And you mentioned a little bit earlier about not wanting to rely on outside investment. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>, can you walk me through that mentality and how you acquired those funds? Was it with those side gigs, or did eventually you rely a little bit on other investors?

Aaron Hark ([14:30](#)):

Well, the, the side gigs kept the power on and the food on the table <laugh>. We, in the early years, not proud of it, but I I, plenty of those pizzas that were \$3 at Kroger, like when they go on sale once a month, the frozen pizzas,

Candice Hark ([14:43](#)):

There was a lot of that. I mean, the great thing about when we started this company and the kind of company we started is that it was low overhead. Yeah. Like we just needed a server. And then the rest of it was sweat equity. And so like, we didn't have to make a whole lot of money. We were living cheap <laugh>, we were eating pizza <laugh>. And, and so it was, it was actually feasible for us to side hustle our way into, into the, the, the company. And we did not ever take outside investment. That was really important to us. But if you were starting a different company, that would not be possible and you would probably need outside investment.

Aaron Hark ([15:16](#)):

But the, the bootstrapping of a company like this, like Candy said, there's not, there was not a lot of overhead at the time, but there was a lot of sweat equity put into it. So, for example, trying to figure out how to market to schools, one of the first things that we did my, my dad helped me out. He was like, I'm gonna, we, we went to the public library, got a, and I can tell you things that will date us with this company. You understand This company that we created here, this predates the iPhone. Okay. There are no, no iPads. There is no Gmail. All right. So just to give you a sense of the slog of selling this to begin with, you know, we're telling University of South Carolina, you don't, these student records that you have, you don't need to keep them on your campus.

Aaron Hark ([15:54](#)):

You're gonna just entrust them to us. We'll keep them safe and you're just gonna pay us every year to do that. And they're like, we have servers at the corner of Blossom and Sumter. We have a whole building of them. And why can't we just keep them in our place? Like, that's not our model. You think about it today, you use software on the web all the time. Yeah. The notion of having a server on this campus or installing a product on a computer is foreign in 2022. But when we started, that's all there was. Yeah.

Candice Hark ([16:20](#)):

People want us to send 'em the cd, like, can we install the cd? I'm like, no, no, you cannot install the CD?

Aaron Hark ([16:25](#)):

Could you, could you give us our source code and or your source code and let us install it on our servers? No. 'cause what we do, we're, we're a product at the time, it's called application service provider. But now we call it software as a service. You're just gonna pay us and we're gonna manage all that. And when we do an upgrade, we're in charge of it that way. And that's

Candice Hark ([16:40](#)):

Works out. 'cause We're 20 something, you know, we don't, we, we look much more mature Now. We did not <laugh> we did not look quite as mature back then. And so it was a harder sell.

Aaron Hark ([16:49](#)):

But in terms of bootstrapping that, like one of the first things we did to figure out who might be interested in buying this product, went to the public library, got one of the publications of, of I think AAU universities. And they, they classify folks by job title. So you could, you could go and look and say, I want to get all the people with a title that's classified as 38, which was Dean of Students. And my dad just took his, his laptop and just copied those names and addresses. And they, we mailed the letters. So like they didn't have emails in the, in the, in the directory. They had email, but they didn't have emails in the directory. So we had our flyer printed, which had way too many words on it for a flyer because I never took a marketing class and I didn't realize you don't wanna like have it look like, you know, a really small fine print dictionary on a flyer. But anyway, we want to tell everybody everything about the software. But we mailed those letters to 150, 200 schools and we actually got some bites. I mean, I think 15 schools called us back and said, I got this flyer in the mail. Yeah. We, we'd be interested in software like this kind of went from there. So there was a lot of that kind of thing to build it up, which just required sweat as opposed to money.

Dr. Jeff Savage ([17:53](#)):

It's coming out that there's maybe each one of you has a role <laugh> maybe that's a little bit different. Can you tell us about how you kind of yin and yang and how you made that work between you two? Oh, yeah.

Aaron Hark ([18:03](#)):

It's evolved over time.

Candice Hark ([18:05](#)):



Absolutely. So I do more operations stuff. We actually both code, we still both code to this day. We have a very small dev team and more two of 'em. So it's

Aaron Hark ([18:14](#)):

More than just us, but we are still there are

Candice Hark ([18:16](#)):

More than just us Yeah. At this point. But yeah, I do a lot of operation stuff. I manage the staff more. Aaron does a lot more of our outward reach to, you know, partners in the field to more more business development, more vision. I would say if, if you're gonna put us in typical boxes, I'm more COO. He's more CEO I would say. And I would say, and, and for as far as the company goes, he's more of a risk taker. I'm more conservative is, you know, let's take it easy on that. Let's, let's think about this for a minute. And so that, I think that fits with stereotypical, you know, roles.

Aaron Hark ([18:49](#)):

And I, I still very much do that. Even it's, it's gotten more challenging. I, I've said the metaphor many times over the years doing this. Like when we first started this company, particularly in the first few years we could make a change. And it was like driving a jet ski. I mean, no big deal. You know, we just make a sharp turn. If we, if we have a problem in the morning, we'll call the 20 clients and just let 'em know, Hey, this button's not gonna work for the next four hours. 'cause We're putting out a new feature. You know, now we kind of have to make our turns like the world's largest cruise ship during six o'clock dinner service. I mean, we can't really disrupt anything or else folks get really upset. So I, I'm still I'm not a move fast and break things person, but I, I, I'm more likely to tell the team, let's push forward with this.

Aaron Hark ([19:27](#)):

We just, we made a change a few months ago and it was, we were getting really close into the middle of August when all the schools are opening back up and, and really everything needs to be up and running. And we had a couple big changes we wanna push out. And I was like, let's just, just do it. It's gonna break things for a day or two. Rip the bandaid, whatever you wanna say, it's gonna be better for a couple days and people are gonna love it after that. So I, among our team and probably among our, our duo, I'm more likely to be that way.

Dr. Jeff Savage ([19:52](#)):

We often think that like the perfect team is one where everyone has the same ideas. Right. And, and that ends up being a lemming situation, right. Where y'all kind of go down the same cliff together. So how does, how does that kind of work when you have that, these conflicts and like, how do you work through that?

Candice Hark ([20:10](#)):

Yeah, the team loves it when mom and dad fight, like <laugh>. Yeah. So we've been doing this together so long. Like I met Aaron my very first day of undergrad and we've been together ever since. So we, we were there together for four years and then we started a business together. Now we have family together.

Aaron Hark ([20:24](#)):

I was her RA And what would be horribly scandalous today? <Laugh>, it

Candice Hark ([20:27](#)):

Would've been reported in our system. <Laugh>. Yeah. So

Aaron Hark ([20:32](#)):

Sorry, go ahead.

Candice Hark ([20:35](#)):

But I think, I think the thing that I always go back to, and again, I'm not gonna speak for you is that I know that no matter how mad I get or how passionately I feel about my idea, I'm like, he's so wrong. Like, I just know that like, at the end of the day, like we both want what's best for the company. We both want what's best for our marriage and our life together. So as long as you just keep that in the back of your head, like he would never purposely do anything. Like he just, he just feels differently about that. And so you, you just have to take a step back sometimes. And it doesn't always, you know, get resolved in a day. Sometimes there's some quiet time

Aaron Hark ([21:06](#)):

<Laugh> Yeah.

Candice Hark ([21:08](#)):

You know, between the two. But but actually I think it does sometimes work out when we debate an idea in front of the team because they can see what each of our lines of thinking is. And then they can take a, you know, an informed side. And, and that's helpful, I think actually. So, and you have to, then you have to let it go. You have to separate it. It's not, not, I, I'm not a person who believes in the statement. It's not personal, it's just business. Because I think if it, you spend, so, and I I, I know I'm on a tangent, but I, you spend so much of your life doing it right, you have to make it personal. If it's not personal, why are you doing it? That's probably unhealthy. But that, that is how I do my business. And so I, it is not that. But I try not to take personally any disagreements. 'cause Again, at the end of the day, we just both want the best for the company.

Aaron Hark ([21:53](#)):

I agree with every, everything she said. I mean, I, I like to <laugh>. No, I mean, there, there are, there are certainly times where we don't see eye to eye on things. We'll, we'll kind of make our respective cases. We'll take a little time. It tends to work out. There are there are plenty of times where, you know, I'll, I'll back down on something because she'll talk some sense into me. I'm, I'm blowing steam about one thing or another. And she'll say, you know what, just write it in Slack. 'cause A message to yourself. <Laugh> schedule to send it 10 hours from now, and then just think on it for a little bit and you'll delete it. And, and I do. You know, and, and so there's things like that. There's, there's also the first customer we lost we, we lost a school and it was about our 300, 400 I think.

Aaron Hark ([22:36](#)):

I so see how much it affected me. I don't remember exactly where they were in the, in the scheme of things, but I'd say we had 400 schools at that point in time before we lost a customer, which is pretty awesome. And I tried to keep that in check. She was pretty upset about it. I was, we, we were at another

school, she's like, oh, it's like, you know, it's like the world is closing in. I was like, no, the world's not closing in. Like, we lost one school. Who cares? And they'll be back and they're back.

Candice Hark ([22:59](#)):

They're back <laugh>.

Aaron Hark ([23:00](#)):

So you know, it is, I think, I don't know, I I I try to keep things in check, but overall we're, things are great with us. And then we spend all of our time together, which is kind of wild. A lot of people ask me that, like, how do you do that? And I don't know, not everybody can do it. It just works for us. We used to travel together all the time for work and our staff we try to foster an environment where they understand it's totally cool to disagree with us to speak up. I, I need those voices. And we, we need those voices all the time. And so our staff doesn't really have a problem with, like she said, it's, it's funny to them when mom and dad fight. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>. But they will, they will speak up. And that, that also helps things too.

Caroline Byrd ([23:35](#)):

Someone that you're married to is also the co CEO. How do you kind of create that work-life balance when you go home and make dinner with the person that you're owning a business with? <Laugh>.

Aaron Hark ([23:44](#)):

So we don't go home. We've been remote before remote was a thing before the pandemic. So our, our entire company has worked remotely for, its its entire existence. Existence. So all of our staff, like that was a, that was a big perk working for us. Now everybody has that perk. So I

Candice Hark ([23:59](#)):

Mean, there's not so much separation sometimes really. I mean, I think it would probably be healthier if there was, but you know, it is like, we're sitting there and you make the spaghetti and the kids are yelling and you're like, ah, did you email that guy <laugh>? You know, and

Aaron Hark ([24:12](#)):

Every, every Maxient corporate event, every every customer conference there's a shirt and there's always toddler and youth sizes ordered. Like our kids wear Maxient shirts. Everybody's Yeah. It, it's, it's a thing. So

Candice Hark ([24:24](#)):

Yeah. It's kind of family business. Yeah. You know, they, it, we used to joke whenever we'd go out to dinner, like, we should put it on the business card. 'cause We've definitely had <laugh> substantive business conversations over the course of this dinner. We never did that. I just wanna say we didn't do that. But we used to joke that we could, 'cause we did talk about it a lot, but this month you're fortunately for us, we're both sick of it. And you're just like, I'm done. Let's just go have some wine. Like, you know, like it's, it's like I don't, I don't want to talk about it anymore. And then fortunately, those things kind of run cycles and when they don't, you can just say that and you say like, yeah, I don't wanna talk about this right now. Let's just do something else.

Aaron Hark ([24:57](#)):

It also helps that day to day, most of what we do, we aren't in fairly different spheres anymore. You know, like if you're dealing with some staff issue or something and I'm dealing with a code issue we might catch up on that later on. And it's not a, not a oddity for us.

Candice Hark ([25:11](#)):

We actually do work in different parts of the house. Yeah. <Laugh>, that helps a little

Aaron Hark ([25:13](#)):

Bit. We have our own offices, so

Candice Hark ([25:15](#)):

Yeah. And then, and once we've had kids now by just the nature of having children, you have to put some of that in a box. Yeah. And just like go, you know, put it aside. And it's actually really helpful too, 'cause it gives you more perspective. Like, you can sit there and laugh with them about, you know, whatever game you're playing and you're like yeah, that mistake I made earlier today really doesn't matter right now. Like it's, and so that's, that's helpful too. It actually forces you to separate a bit.

Aaron Hark ([25:38](#)):

I, I think mentally, like as we're sitting up here answering questions, I'm still thinking like Aaron from 2005, 2007, early days of the company. The truth is right now, things have evolved quite a bit. So like our team handles a lot more stuff. We're still very hands-on, but yeah, I'm not normally thinking about business. I take my son to soccer. We both go to soccer practice on Thursday evenings, you know, five o'clock. I'm not thinking about work at that point. I'm typically not for the rest of the evening. So I would say at this point we've, we've evolved to a decent amount of separation.

Candice Hark ([26:06](#)):

Yeah. Let's say in the beginning there was no separation. Yeah. No. But now a little bit helps, you know, 'cause of other activities.

Kasie Whitener ([26:13](#)):

That's been a Faber Speaker series conversation with Dr. Jeff Savage and Aaron and Candace Hark of Maxient. To hear more with the harks, visit the Faber Center website to access the full interview. You can also find more Faber Speaker series, events and registration information on that site. All events are free and open to the public. This has been Moore Impact. When you learn more, you know more. And when you know more, you do more. Thanks for listening.