

PITCHIT FINTECH STARTUPS PODCAST NO. 23-TOLGA TEZEL

Welcome to PitchIt, the fintech startups podcast, one founder, one startup, one investor at a time. I'm your host, Todd Anderson, Chief Product Officer, LendIt Fintech.

This week's episode is sponsored by Zendesk, start building trust from day one. The Zendesk for Startups Program gives you easy to use and secure solutions you need to manage your sales pipeline, support your customers and scale your fintech. Benefits of the program include engaging with the exclusive startup community on Zendesk of founders and partners for advice, connections and events and using the Zendesk technology will allow you to connect with customers and prospects across chat, email, social media and phone, all in one centralized location. Qualified startups will get Zendesk for free for six months. To qualify, you must have raised venture funding up to and before Series A, have fewer than 50 employees and be a new Zendesk customer. For more details, please check out the link in the show notes which will bring you to Zendesk for Startups.

(music)

Todd Anderson: On Episode 23, I talk with Tolga Tezel of Canopy Connect. Canopy Connect is building the infrastructure that powers best-in-class insurance experiences. They empower consumers to gain value and convenience from their own data and help enable businesses securely and quickly support their customers. You know, it's really taking the process of sharing insurance data and just making it infinitely more simple and more efficient.

You no longer have to fumble around or go out to your car and look for a VIN number, find that big stack of insurance papers and sift through that. You log-in to your insurance carrier to the Canopy Connect portal and you essentially share your information. Tolga and I discuss how far insurances behind as compared to fintech, the importance of consumer-permissioned data, raising capital and a whole lot more. I hope you enjoy the show.

(music)

Welcome to the podcast, Tolga, how are you?

Tolga Tezel: Thank you, Todd, thanks for having me. I'm doing well.

Todd: You know, I'd like to just start off with a quick introduction o if you can tell the audience a little bit about yourself, where were you professionally before starting Canopy Connect and, you know, tell the audience a little bit about yourself overall.

Tolga: Hi, everybody. I'm Tolga, Founder and CEO at Canopy Connect. I guess you could say I'm an engineer at heart, my entire background, you know, is in engineering. Growing up, I always knew that I was going to be an engineer, basically everybody in my entire family, even going out to...because of

this stuff, pretty much everybody had some kind of engineering degree so this was always kind of something that I gravitated towards. Kind of how I guess I got started with Canopy Connect is after, you know, cutting my teeth in various startups and then eventually one of the startups that I was working for got acquired by Dropbox.

I spent a few years at Dropbox building some of their infrastructure and product experiences. You know, after a few years of doing that I wanted to do something that, you know, was early stage and also something where the work that I was doing was more directly impacting individuals and having some kind of like clear, tangible, positive impact on them. I started becoming interested in fintech as a way of sort of having a tangible impact on people. I think one of the most tangible ways of impacting people's lives is to impact their financial lives in a positive way.

And so, when this company, Nova Credit, reached out to me after I left Dropbox and was looking for the next thing I was going to do, their mission immediately struck home with me. What Nova Credit does is they're building the world's first-class cross border kind of reporting database and so they enabled individuals to be able to share their international credit history in their local country, local context with a business that's trying to understand them and this is especially useful for people who don't have credit history in the country that they're currently in. And, you know, any of your listeners who are listening, any immigrant would probably know what I'm talking about if you move from one country to another, you have to start from scratch in the new country because they don't know anything about the credits cards you had, the loans, mortgages, all that kind of stuff.

You know, they reached out to me and they said, hey, you want to build this for Canada and help Canadians have the ability to get fair access to credit in the United States. I had actually ran into that problem myself and so I immediately understood what they were trying to do and it felt to me like okay, this is awesome, a company that's actually doing something that helps individual consumers get fair access to credit, that's something that I felt like I could get behind and felt like a good use of my time. And so, I joined them and helped launch them in several countries and then....at Nova Credit, that's where I fell in love with consumer-permissioned data.

You know, I saw firsthand that when you build the ability for the consumer to do something that they wanted to do with their own information and you just make it extremely easy to do that, you can allot better financial outcomes for them. Tangibly, what we're doing is we were helping immigrants share their international credit history, like let's say, you get off the plane from India, you walk into a bank and you try to get a loan, you know, you literally just walk into the bank, you have no American credit history, they're just going to reject you because they don't know anything about you in order to extend credit. And so, with Nova Credit you'll be able to share your Indian credit history, in this case, with the US bank and then the bank would be able to look at that information and even look at it as if you were an American even though you're not because it came complete with a FICO score.

And so through that work, you know, we were seeing that we were helping real people a lot better financial outcomes for themselves in the form of getting a credit card instead of getting rejected for a credit card or getting much better terms on credit products where they would have had to use things

like pay six months rent upfront. So, I really fell in love with the idea because I was seeing it firsthand of what you could do when you enable consumers to have data controls out of their own data that's locked away somewhere. And so, I started thinking like, okay, what other data could we unlock for consumers to help them achieve better financial outcomes for themselves and then I randomly stumbled into the insurance industry by exploring that theme.

So, it's mostly looking at ideas in the fintech space which is what that is at the time more familiar with and then I had a rein in conversation with an independent insurance agency owner and she was telling me how hard it was for her to acquire new customers because she was asking people over the phone their insurance details like people would be talking her to get an auto insurance for let's say and then she would say like, okay great, can you tell me the VIN number on each of your vehicles, your annual mileage.....

Todd: It's an 87 number.

Tolga: I mean, people don't remember their credit card numbers, how are they supposed to remember their VIN number, right.

Todd: Exactly.

Tolga: Now, if you ask them what's your annual mileage, history, premiums, deductibles, they end up being dozens if questions that you would have to ask them to get even a reasonably accurate one and what she was finding was that the majority of people were dropping out of the process before actually getting to that quote. You know, because she was asking people all these questions and they didn't know the answers to them, they would just say, oh, let me get back to you later or oh, I don't have time for that right now and they would just drop out of the process because of the friction. This was the case even though she was telling me that she could typically save people money or get them better average or both, she just wasn't even getting to the stage where she could present that to people and actually show them that she could them under better insured.

She was telling me that to make that process easier, she had started driving to her clients' houses and showing them how to log into their own online insurance accounts and download their declaration pages and the other information that she needed from them because all the questions that she was asking, their current insurer already had all that data. And so, she was driving to their houses, showing them how to log into their own online accounts, printing out their declarations pages, driving back to her office with those papers in hand and then typing all that information into a radar software to generate some quotes and then she'd be able to cost and be back and tell them how much money she could save them on their auto policy and what kind of coverage she could get and (inaudible).

I assume like a lot of your listeners probably have heard of companies like Finicity and Plaid, Yodlee, like these companies that are helping individuals link their bank accounts to different applications, right. So, if anybody has used Venmo, Robinhood, Personal Capital Mint, any of those financial management apps or even online banking, you've probably already linked your bank account in order

to be able to move money around or view transaction data on a personal finance app. And so, these things have already been happening for years with bank accounts and through my conversation with the agency owner, it became clear to me that we could build the same kind of technology for insurance accounts that have been built already for bank accounts enabling the consumer to link their data to a business that they want to work with and share that data with.

That's where the idea started for Canopy Connect and it was always centered around.....and to this day, our North Star is always around how can we help the consumer get value and convenience out of their own data.

Todd: Before jumping into exactly what Canopy does and the types of, you know, insurance that you work with, type of insurance that you connect to, did you always want to be a founder. It sounded like from what you were saying in the intro was you wanted to get into early stage, was founding your company always kind of on the roadmap, did you kind of stumble into it a little bit more?

Tolga: I've always wanted to found a company, I think I basically caught the startup bug back in 2011, I had my first startup experience while I was still in university. I worked for my first startup a lot as I was doing my degree. They are actually an insurtech startup called Datalot in New York, they're a much bigger company, but at that time there were I think ten people. For me, I caught the startup bug by joining them, doing an internship, building some stuff, I had never learned that quickly in my life as was going through that startup experience at that internship.

At that point, that's when I realized, you know I want to be in the early startup world because I've typically always optimized for learning experiences and I find that you get the best learning experiences in early stage startups. After being involved with a bunch of early stage startups, you know, you get to see how things get built from some of the earliest stages. For me, I started developing an interest in actually building a startup, the next learning experience was like okay, I've been involved in this early-stage startups from some of the earliest stages and seen the evolution of them. And then, when I joined Dropbox, I joined right when it was sort of starting to hyper-grow and also sort of got to see that side of things. Then it was like I kind of came to the conclusion that I did want to found something and it was just a matter oflike a lot of these things come around to timing.

I think the reason why a lot of people who would want to found something but don't or find the right time eventually for this just like things line up to a point where you start to feel like pushed over the line. For me, I thought like I'd discovered this area of consumer-permissioned data that I really wanted to build something around and I started building a little prototype and showing it to people. I'm the kind of person that's always been building side projects, build things on the weekend and things like that and the prototype that I'd built of Canopy Connect, I was starting to talk to insurance players and showed them this demo and they were just completely blown away by it and I've never gotten that kind of feedback from people before.

That was unusual to me, you know, like people were just like how the hell are you doing this, this is amazing, this would be gamechanger for my business and all these kind of like really amazing

feedback. Before, when I built little projects on the side and showed it to people, you know, it was a lot, lot less of a clear like.....

Todd: Oh, this is kind of cool like maybe this could be something, but, I mean, it's interesting to hear direct feedback from, you know, the insurance industry saying it could potentially transform their business. As you talk about kind of exactly what Canopy offers, first, where did you come up with the name Canopy Connect?

Tolga: That took actually a lot longer than I wanted to come up with a name and logo. I'm a builder, I love building and so like things like coming up with the name and logo feel like a bit of a distraction, but there's all these websites that you can use to like generate domain names like phrases and ideas so I basically used that, used like synonym.com or whatever, you know, all those websites to come up with different creative words that I could create a name out of and I ended up settling on the word "canopy" as something, like a word that I just really liked.

To me, it reminded me and reminds me of sitting underneath like a tree in a forest, imagine like redwood trees, really tall like beautiful, you're just of kind of sitting or standing below them and they're kind of covering you and maybe the sun's peeking out. To me, it kind of evokes like a feeling of like cover and like safety and it obviously ties to insurance and then "connect" is like, you know, because we are connecting data and connecting coverage data. So, that's kind of how the name came to be.

Todd: So, you talked a little bit about, you know, the process of how this works so exactly spell out for the audience how Canopy works and what the connection is, types of insurance that you guys focus on today and, you know, within that, you've mentioned it a few times, you were enamored by it, why is that consumer-permissioned part so important? It's important to touch on that a little bit more because these days there's so much data available on us. Tell us a little bit more why the consumer-permissioned part is important not only to you, but why you think it is more generally.

Tolga: It comes around to....what we're kind of seeing is the shift that's occurring and it started already to occur so it's well in progress right now where both regulators and consumers and the market is just generally understanding that data, regardless of where it lives, is actually the property of whoever it's about. That's the position that, you know, regulators have already taken around bank data, for instance.

Todd: It hasn't always been the case, right, previously, it's been thought that even though it's you and information about you, if it lives within a certain bank. it's the bank's data.

Tolga: Right.

Todd: That view has now changed that because it's me, it's my information, it's my data and I can then take that data and give it to someone else to give myself a product that suits me better.

Tolga: My general take on this is it kind of started with GDPR, I think. GDPR, you know, obviously started in Europe and then things like PST2 came along with it. You have sort of both sides of regulation there; one where consumers are the owners of their data, regardless of where it lives, anywhere in the world, right and this isn't even just a European thing. This is actually something that ...there's multiple countries and jurisdictions that have launched similar types of regulation as well. You know, in California CCPA is a recent example of that, but you also have other countries that are adopting essentially similar regulations, some of the important pieces that are in GDPR like that consumers have the right to request their data from any business that has it.

They have the right to be forgotten so they have the right to ask if this is to delete their data. Generally, the consumer has the ability now to request that their data be used how they want it to and so with things like PST2 now like if you're a bank and you're over in the UK...for instance, in order to have a banking license, you actually have to build an API that enables consumer-permissioned data transactions to occur on your platform. I think Europe, in general, has been kind of leading the way on this, other countries have started to see the effects of that. It's ultimately good for the consumer, there's more choice for the consumer, there's more transparency.

Generally, markets operate more efficiently with more transparency and then you have increased competition as well so new entrants are able to enter the market, but it all, you know, really ties back to what's good for the consumer. Allowing the consumer to own their data like results in them having the power around what happens with their data and makes it easy for them to do whatever they wanted to do rather than like, you know, the data being locked away somewhere. I think, generally, what you're seeing is the benefit of consumer data is mostly going to businesses that happen to have a copy of it.

Whereas there's kind of this movement now where the value of that data is being shared, at least shared with the consumer, right, like if a business has a copy of your data, sure they can use it for certain things to make their service better. But, that data is the consumer's data and so they should receive value and convenience out of that data as well. I think that's like generally the theme that I really gravitated towards is, you know, the understanding that most of the value of consumer data is just going to businesses that happen to have a copy of it. How can we give consumers back that value and convenience?

Todd: Relating it back to what Canopy does, you know, how many carriers are you working with, you know, kind of ballpark. Is it hundreds, dozens and then what types of insurance? You've mentioned a couple, I think I heard you mention cars in one of your intros though I think you do offer a little bit more so tell us more about your kind of connections you're making right now and kind of how big is the universe today.

Tolga: We work with several dozens carriers, we know, any cover over 85% of the market, we deal with personal insurance. In a nutshell, what we've built is the easiest way for a consumer to be able to share their personal insurance data with a third party that they want to share that with. That's what we do in a nutshell. By personal insurance, I'm referring to personal property and casualty insurance so

auto, home, boat, motorcycle, condo, renters, umbrella, you know, any of the personal property and casualty lines of business.

We're able to pull that data directly from the carrier based on getting the consumer's consent to pull that data and authenticating the consumer as well. You know, obviously, security and privacy are paramount in this and then we're able to pull and normalize that data and provide it in a structured way with our API as well as a dashboard where customers are able to, if they want to, they can just see the data as well and work with their customer.

Todd: So, going back to that example you were talking about, the insurance carrier calls me and they say hey, we could save you a ton of money, 30% on what you're currently paying. Now, practically speaking, do I then log-in with the agent into a Canopy dashboard, they send me a specific link or they tell me where to go. I then connect in that dashboard to, you know, my current insurance carrier, that information is then uploaded to the dashboard, the agent who's on the phone probably sees that in real-time, they can then offer a quote based upon that information that goes into their system. Is it minutes, essentially a 5-minute phone call I can get a new quote versus a half hour 45-minute type-in phone call?

Tolga: I think you, more or less, described it, like it's very similar to...if you ever linked your online bank account to a website or in an app, we've built a very similar type of flow. As a insured or as a consumer, you're arriving at this website or even a mobile app, that mobile app is asking for a copy of your insurance information and you, as a consumer, want to share it with them. Let's say to get a quote, for example, you just select your insurance carrier and then log-in directly with the insurance carrier, after you authenticate with the carrier we're able to pull the data directly from the carrier. Like I said, you know, normalize it, structure it and then provide that to the app, in this case, that you want to get a quote from.

And we're able to get a lot of the data within seconds, we're also able to get more historical data which can take a couple of minutes to get, but that's just dependent on how much data there is in the account. So, because we're getting somebody's complete property and casualty lines of business, we know now that these are data that shows that the average consumer actually has more than two lines of business with their carrier on average. And so, we definitely see on an average people come with multiple policies and then some people would come with ten or more policies and so it's also dependent on how much data that individual has. You're looking at, you know, a few seconds to get a lot of the critical stuff and then two/three minutes to get more historical data as well.

Todd: Why do you think a company like.....you mentioned Plaid and a few others, obviously, some of what they've done has made your idea and business easier, but on the other side, has it made the conversation with the carrier and insurance company a concept of the permissioned-date, the log-in, the sharing, the API, is it to a point where that's kind of expected in a conversation versus maybe a few years ago, it would be pretty rudimentary for you to go through hey, this is what we can do, this is how it's done. Now, some of that is already baked-in, you have companies like Plaid who kind of built this initial layer for you and has allowed companies like yours to build then on top of that.

Tolga: It's a little different because, you know, we're not building on top of anything really, like we're not building on top of Plaid, we've built our own infrastructure.

Todd: Yeah. What I mean is that concept of the layer of the Internet, the permission, the API, not that you're building on Plaid, but that concept is now normalized in people's minds where a few years ago, you probably go to an insurance agent and they'll look at you probably like you had ten heads. Now, they look at you and say, I understand the concept of data sharing, log-in, I do that in my own life with Plaid and I just bought stocks on Robinhood the other day. To me, the concept makes more sense today.

Togel: I was actually just going to say that even though we don't build on their technology because we have our own technology, the precedence have been set, I mean, Plaid is a great example of that. So, they popularized this ability to like link your bank account with the business. I think also, importantly, they showed that you can build a true infrastructure business out of that, you know, rather than being like some kind of personal financial management app that has the ability to link bank accounts, you know, they also realized that there was an infrastructure play there to build infrastructure that other businesses could use to do things with bank data.

I think, certainly, the precedence that have been set by Plaid, Finicity, Yodlee and the others in the banking space certainly made our lives easier think for a number of reasons. A really important one is that the consumer is actually like used to this now, right, like one of the earliest assumptions that we needed to validate at Canopy Connect was that people were going to benot only people have online insurance accounts, but they're also willing and able to log-in with those, right. That is a really important consumer behavior that, thankfully, because of the path that has been blazed by companies like Plaid and Finicity and others, consumers are already used to doing that with their bank account and so this is not at all a stretch to say like okay, you can do this with your bank account, well now, you can also do with your online insurance account.

And I think had that not been the case, it would have been a lot harder for us to get the kind of adoption and growth that we've seen like people are used to it and, therefore, it's less of a stretch that they would do this with online insurance accounts. We had to, of course, validate those assumptions for ourselves to make sure that that was true, but I'm quite confident that Plaid and Finicity and others doing this with bank accounts made it easier for us. And, I think like you said too, it just makes it easier when you take an existing model that you can point to and say look, this is already happening in other industries, we're bringing this technology to the insurance industry, it just makes sense for everybody involved, right.

And so, whether you're talking to a carrier, whether you're talking to a business that needs to collect insurance information or whether you're talking to a consumer, they've all seen this before at this point and so it certainly makes things a lot easier. Just like the positioning is well like that, you know, you can build an infrastructure business out of this and there will be a lot of different use cases around the

data. Companies like Plaid has sort of proven that out that that can happen with bank data and I think it, again, creates like less of a stretch for us to do this. So, yeah, definitely it has made it easier.

Todd: That leads nicely into my next question which is....I think most of the listeners of this podcast, obviously, are a bit more entrenched in fintech versus insurtech, but, you know, from an innovation standpoint the selling that works in the insurtech or the insurance industry, where are they as maybe compared to fintech or are they years behind? It seems that insurance is taking a bit longer to kind of begin to get there. To me, I only think fintech's just starting to get there even though we've had a lot of innovation with fintech, you know, is insurance still a fair amount behind?

Togel: My honest answer is yes, I believe so. In think, in general, the insurance industry, and this isn't a knock on anybody at all, but I believe that if you look around at what's going on in fintech and what's going on in insurtech, I think you can fairly conclude that the insurance industry is...let's call it like five would be probably generous, but five to ten years behind, you know, what's happening in fintech. But, I think that's also really exciting in a way because, and I think this has generally been the case, you can like look at what's happening in the fintech industry and like there's a lot of things that you can extrapolate will happen in the insurtech industry as a result.

The other thing I would say is like the fact that there aren't that many exciting like true cutting edge things happening in the insurance industry also means that like when a company like us comes into the picture and we start doing, you know, interesting things in the insurance industry, I think it also like helps us stand out more. And so, we're not the only company, you know, doing closed stuff in the insurance industry, but I think that makes it a good sighting to me to feel like we're pioneering, so to speak, like some interesting developments in the insurance industry. I think, in general, you can take a look at like a lot of stuff that's happening in fintech and use that to extrapolate what will happen in the insurance industry too.

Todd: I want to shift a little bit. You know, you've been growing and building your company, obviously, during the pandemic, you know, how big is the team today. I presume that you guys are probably all remote, are you operating both in the US and Canada, kind of tell us a little bit more generally about your team and how things have been going, especially building in a time that we're living right now.

Togel: Sure, yeah. We're about a dozen people, we're trying to hire right now, especially for engineering roles, so if anybody is listening, is a strong software engineer, please I'd be happy to chat with you, but, yeah, we're a fully distributed team based in the United States. You know, United States makes sense for us, it's the world's largest insurance market, by far, and it's also, you know, the most sophisticated insurance market so made sense for us to focus there, although, this is a global problem and we will expand into other markets as well.

You know, it was interesting, we founded this company and grew it mostly during COVID, you know, I was doing like fundraising, for instance, during COVID. You know, it's a really, really interesting time, I think it made some things easier in a way which was unexpected. I think, frankly, I'm not sure this is the case, but I feel like it actually made fundraising, for instance, easier because I was able to do a lot

of back-to-back Zoom calls just sitting at my desk whereas I'm sure there would have been a lot more travel involved had it not been during COVID times. It's also made fully remote quite standard, I've enjoyed that as well my team has really enjoyed the ability to work from where we want, create a lot of flexibility for us and we also feel like we're more productive that way. It does make things like offsites and things like that harder and obviously in-person gatherings harder, but I think in some ways there were also some benefits as well.

And then, if you also look at it from the product perspective, I remember during March of last year, right around the time COVID was declared a pandemic, you know, some of our early customers were a little bit like panicking a bit trying to figure out how are they going to like adjust to this new...like everybody has to stop using their offices, they had to like move around their phone lines and everything that they were doing, they had to change their processes in a lot of cases. I remember at that time wondering like whether this was going to have a detrimental or positive impact on our business. I think, overall, it's had a positive impact because folks are transacting online more than ever, people are creating online accounts more than ever and are expecting online service as well.

Todd: Yeah. It's becoming more normal like you were talking about before when we were mentioning the Plaid example that the more transactions people do online, the more they get used to all these stuff and it just makes for an easier transition. You mentioned raising money and the back-to-back Zooms so how has investor appetite been. You know, fintech, clearly, is an overheated area right now, I'm sure there's plenty of capital going into insurtech as well, but, you know, any advice also that maybe you can give to other founders on the raising capital process.

Togel: I feel like it's even more founder-friendly and like people are getting great terms I think now more than even like when I was doing my run. I would say, I got the sense like it just keeps getting hotter, the market was generally quite like founder-friendly when I was doing my fundraise, but I feel like it's even more so now. I think it's actually a fantastic time to raise if you're thinking about it, like my general sense is that there's more money in the market than people know what to do with it. I think it's like whether you're insurtech or another type of business, I think it's a generally good time to raise right now, that's what I've seen.

You know, when I think about my fundraising journey, it was actually way less about the money because the money is actually pretty easy to find and it's more about like finding who are the right partners for your business for the long term. That is more of a challenge in my mind than finding the money so that involved talking to dozens and dozens and dozens of different investors, it was a lot like a hiring decision I think, in my opinion.

Todd: I've heard that from others as well. You have to be careful because you can take the money from someone, but they might be after super high returns in a super short period of time when in reality what you're really looking for is a long-term partner than can help you grow in a, you know, fast, but a way that makes sense for the business that you have.

Togel: I think you want somebody who's going to get your business right and who you're going to enjoy working with all the time. You know, ideally, you want to enjoy your relationships with your investors, obviously. You know, they're essentially working with you and so that kind to me reduces to like, more or less, the kinds of decision making you might make when hiring. When I looked at doing our fundraise, took a look around at our company, I was like what do I feel like skills or knowledge or connections, you know, something like that we are lacking, nothing to do with the money and then who are those people and then you can find those people amongst investors.

One example is Nate Rodlin from Elefan (?) was very impressed with, you know, his operational expertise. Talking through things with him, he's been extremely tactical and helpful from the beginning and so I felt like me coming from more of an engineering background and having less of an operating or, you know, basically no operating experience at that time, pairing myself with somebody who did have that kind of experience and that's kind of how we, you know, decided on Nate and Elefan (?) at that time and then we kind of continued to look at our team and what did we feel like we're missing from the team and let's find investors who have those things. So, that's kind of how I looked at it.

Todd: We have just a couple of minutes left, I'd like to end with a little bit of fun. Do you have a favorite book and what's the last book you read. If you're not a big reader then pick some other medium that maybe you consumer information on.

Togel: I want to be reading more, but I spend a lot of time working and less time reading than I feel like I should. I feel like the best book that I read recently was the classic negotiating book, "Never Split the Difference," I love the stories in that. For folks who haven't read it, it's a generally short read too, I forgot how many pages it was, I want to say it's less than 200 pages. My thing, more recently, has been finding short but sweet books that I can kind of get through them, that's the last one that I read recently.

In terms of fiction, it's been a really long time actually since I've read a fiction book for fun. Probably the last one that I really enjoyed was like "Sphere" by Michael Crichton, Michael Crichton....I'm not sure if I'm saying his name right. He's the guy that wrote "Jurassic Park," he has actually a lot of amazing fiction novels that I'd recommend, I've read a bunch of them, but that was one of my favorite ones.

Todd: Do you have a favorite sport or sports teams?

Togel: My wife is a big Warriors fan since birth, not a bandwagon fan, but like....

Todd: I feel like everyone has to say that now, since they won, everyone has to say it. (laughs)

Togel: Make sure to clarify that she was watching them well before they were good and when tickets though a lot cheaper. You know, I'm Canadian so the Warriors and the Raptors are my teams, but I'm pretty casual with that like watching sports and so on. But, I would say, like that's like I guess you could call my team, otherwise, I feel a little bit fake saying that because I don't watch all the games or anything.

Todd: (laughs) That's okay. And then final question, biggest inspiration in life.

Togel: The ultimate form of making it for me is really about feeling like I have less some kind of positive impact on the world and so, I would say, my biggest inspiration is folks that are doing work that I believe is good for society. You know, I think about organizations like Charity: Water and Kiva which are doing, in my opinion, like good things for society, I really like organizations like that. And then, when you look at like...I think like one of things that I've been really inspired by, again going back to Nova Credit, is really like companies like that where they found a way to align like some kind of positive good for society with a profit engine that allows you to scale that impact.

That kind of model where you're able to tie some impact that is good with a profit engine, that to me is extremely inspiring because it provides you the ability to just like continue to scale that impact, let's call it infinitely, right. Obviously, there's constraints in life, but let's call it that and so if I had to pick my top inspiration it would be folks that alignment between doing something good for the world and generating a profit with it that allows them to scale that because you are being able to scale a positive impact in the world. It's just phenomenal, in my opinion, so I love that.

Todd: If you could tell the audience where they could find Canopy, potentially they could find you, just maybe give a little information if they want to get in touch and check out some of the stuff you guys are doing.

Togel: Like I said before, we're actively hiring, especially for engineering roles and also for operations roles so please hit the app. So, our website is usecanopy.com, that's u s e c a n o p y . c o m, usecanopycom or you can shoot an email to hello@usecanopy.com. Those are probably the best way to reach us or just Google us, if you Google canopyconnect we'll come up obviously and then, you know, you can reach out from there.

Todd: Alright, sounds good. Well, Togel, thank you so much for coming on the show. I wish you, the team continued success and hopefully, we'll get you back sometime in the future.

Togel: Appreciate it, Todd, thank you so much for having me on today.

Todd: Of course.

This week's episode is sponsored by Zendesk, start building trust from day one. The Zendesk for Startups Program gives you easy to use and secure solutions you need to manage your sales pipeline, support your customers and scale your fintech. Benefits of the program include engaging with the exclusive startup community on Zendesk of founders and partners for advice, connections and events and using the Zendesk technology will allow you to connect with customers and prospects across chat, email, social media and phone, all in one centralized location. Qualified startups will get Zendesk for free for six months. To qualify, you must have raised venture funding up to and before Series A, have

LendIt Fintech



fewer than 50 employees and be a new Zendesk customer. For more details, please check out the link in the show notes which will bring you to Zendesk for Startups.

(music)

Thank you for listening to the latest episode of PitchIt, the fintech startups podcast. I encourage you to take a few minutes to write a review or rate the episode. Ratings and reviews both help us to improve the show for future episodes. If you're interested in learning more or would like to be considered for a future episode, please reach out anytime to Todd, T O D D, at lendit.com and until next time.

(music)