

## TEI 110: How GE's FirstBuild creates products

Host: Chad McAllister, PhD

Guest: Taylor Dawson

CHAD: Hi, this is Chad, your host. Each week, I provide training to product managers through this podcast. I also provide training that helps product managers become product masters. For companies, we use an integrated study group approach that is highly regarded by our past customers. Check out your training options at the same place where you'll find the show notes for this episode: [www.theeverydayinnovator.com/110](http://www.theeverydayinnovator.com/110). Now, we've seen significant increases in large companies creating some type of innovation lab or starting a partnership with an innovation lab and at times even investing in startups or creating a relationship with startup organizations. One benefit of the innovation lab is that you can run at a different pace in the innovation lab than the organization itself can. The lab has more freedom to try quick experiments, explore new areas that may be deemed a little too risky for that larger organization. One lab that caught my attention when I first learned about it a few years ago was First Build, which describes itself as "the place where ideas come to life." First Build is a creation of GE Appliances. They've created an open community with access to world-class engineering and design talent for exploring ideas and creating home appliances. I plan to visit First Build in a few months to learn more about it, but for now, I spoke with Taylor Dawson. He's their product evangelist. Taylor's background is in mechanical design engineering, having spent some time at Lexmark International and then for GE Appliances. In our discussion, you'll learn why First Build was created and how it helps GE, how they identify product ideas and potential marketing segments, why they use crowd-funding platforms like Kickstarter, and why a prototype is worth a thousand meetings. I think you'll enjoy the interview.

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CHAD: Taylor, thanks so much for joining the Everyday Innovator podcast. I am absolutely beside myself getting the opportunity to talk about First Build, and I get to do it with you!

TAYLOR: Thanks for having me on, Chad. I have been looking forward to this opportunity to talk to you as well.

CHAD: When I first discovered First Build, and it might have been an article in Fast Company, I know it came up a couple years ago, I thought, this is a really interesting thing that GE is doing. I'm curious. Can you walk us through the charter of First Build? How this thing came about and what it's supposed to do.

TAYLOR: There's the story and then there's the story behind the story. So I'll start with the story behind the story. I worked at GE Appliances for about four or five years before I came under First Build and there was this initiative that was going around at the time called Fast Works. It turns out that Eric Rees who wrote Lean Startup, I'm sure a lot of your listeners are familiar with that book, became a consultant to the executive team at GE Corporate. So they said it would be interesting to see how these lean startup principles could be incorporated into a big corporation like GE, so they said let's launch this thing called a fast works initiative, where we give people the latitude to make sweeping decisions about a new initiative or a new product or a new service they'd like to launch. Give them a six-month timeframe to launch it and see where it goes. So GE Appliances really took that on as one of the things we wanted to do. I think perhaps more than a lot of the other businesses that were within GE at the time. So they launched this internal initiative where we had basically like a VC panel and employees, on their own initiative, could go in front of the VC panel that was composed of top leadership from GE, and pitch out an idea. If they liked your idea they would sponsor the idea and say go and work on it for the next three

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months, come back and report how it goes and above all, think like a startup. We did that and there were a couple really cool things that came out of it but I think what really came out of it was an acknowledgement that there are so many barriers to being innovative within an organization like GE Appliances that's got established supply chains, established customer bases, established channels to market, that we felt like most of those projects kind of didn't go as far as they could have because of the barriers that existed.

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TAYLOR: So First Build really started in that environment of questioning how we could do something more that would allow us to think more like a startup. In the midst of that, the founder of First Build and leadership on the technology side was looking at the innovation landscape and realizing that we had a whole bunch of really great ideas that existed in GE's R&D labs that really never saw the light of day. Some of those ideas were things that a competitor beat us to market even though it had been in our labs for years. Others were ideas that we thought were great but just never had seen the light of day. The technology team really took it on themselves to decide that they were going to launch an entirely new business that would think and act like a startup and try and figure out ways to get our employees and our community's ideas into the world. The embodiment that took was completely open innovation business, where we operate a website that is an online space where community members can come and share their ideas, participate in challenges, open forums where they can see the things we're working on and feedback on things, as well as a maker space that's modeled after some of the great maker spaces of the United States, where anyone from our local community can walk in the door, laser cut, use the chop saw, power tools, anything that they want to do in order to make the things that they want to make. What it's turned into is this conglomerate of artists and engineers and enthusiasts and hackers who all like to get together and just think about great ideas. On a day-to-day basis, my day looks like...it can go from anything to having a meeting about a product that we've already launched with the marketing team and the supply chain team all the way from ranging to talking with an entrepreneur about one of his passionate ideas that he's working on and figuring out a way that he can make it so he can make his own idea at First Build. We've found that by just inviting community members to get involved, that kind of ups our game as far as internal entrepreneurs as well, because we find out how entrepreneurs are thinking and some of the tools that they're using. That kind of leads into the ways that we've chosen to go to market. Certainly a lot of our go to markets would be very different if we hadn't gotten input and feedback from innovative people in our community.

CHAD: And you are in Kentucky, right?

TAYLOR: Yeah, Louisville, Kentucky, headquarters of GE Appliances is here. We're strategically located on U of L's campus, so we're off-site GE Appliances. There's no barbed wire or razor wire around our facility. Anyone can walk in and we strategically wanted to be on U of L's campus because there's a lot of talent associated with the engineering and the business schools there as well as the arts that are represented at U of L. We wanted to be close to a place where there would be a feed-through of talent and U of L was happy to encourage the symbiosis as a lot of their students now come through capstone projects or are part time or full time employees at First Build and they get to see very quickly what the entire lifecycle of a product looks like, all the way from concept to delivery to the customer and even into the market.

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CHAD: What a great opportunity for the students. I was curious, because you had me when you were talking about open maker space to the community. My son who has engineering tendencies, when he gets off to college this might be a good place for him to go to make good use of that maker space, too.

TAYLOR: Absolutely. We would certainly love to entertain that idea.

CHAD: It would be great fun. I'm sure if I was there I would feel like I was just the kid in the candy store.

TAYLOR: Yeah, so do I. The only regret that I have is that I have to come here as my place of work and working at a kind of a startup within a big company means that we spend a lot of our time working and I have a lot less time for working in the wood shop than I'd like.

CHAD: Right. The hobbies at home get pushed to the side because you're there too much. Is there any feedback back through GE? Is this really independent at this point?

TAYLOR: Yeah, so the real idea was GE Appliances is good at doing what it does. It makes high quality products in large volume and delivers them to big box stores, independent retailers, contractors, and all of those things that it does, it's a growing business, it's doing very well in the United States, but most businesses that have those concerns just like you read in the Innovator's Dilemma, really struggle to embrace new markets that are not currently served. So we thought perhaps we could take a page out of Clay Christensen's playbook of setting up an external space that was run by a small team of people that could get excited about new ideas that may be able to find some products and new markets that would be of interest to GE Appliances in the future. The way we think of ourselves is getting the first bite of the apple on a new and innovative project and then when we prove that there's a market for it, GE Appliances is going to want to take and scale that project up. We don't have the capacity to make 10,000 of anything per year, but we do have the capacity...so the maker space, the whole idea behind it was we call it a micro-factory. We can make 500-1000 of almost anything. Once we've made 1000 units and we've developed a market, we've established what our market positioning and our pricing and our go-to market plans are going to be, we can take all the knowledge we've gained and we can pass it over to GE Appliances. They'll be able to take it to 10,000 to 100,000 units a year in a way that we would never be able to support.

CHAD: Yeah, so in one aspect it's not just the technology but it's really a test market opportunity to learn what could work out there.

[10:51]

TAYLOR: Yeah, we were really motivated by the idea of the minimum viable product. How can you learn as much as possible about a new market, a new concept, with the minimum amount of effort? Some of our products, we will build a fully scaled, fully specified product that we make instead of using mass manufacturing, we'll make using additive manufacturing processes or whatever we feel like are necessary in order to make 1, 2, 10 units of this thing. We'll sell it and try and establish there's a price point where there's interest. I think one of the interesting thing that I'm motivated by is just the market of one. If you can't find a single person who wants to buy it, then that gives you a good idea that you're on the wrong path. A market of one doesn't necessarily mean that it's scalable but at least you can learn

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something from that person. We really try and take advantage of the opportunity to rapidly prototype something in high quality, hopefully get something out to market in three months as opposed to three years, and then prove that the work that we're doing is valuable as opposed to spending three years working on a project and then having it fall flat on its face.

CHAD: Right. Great opportunity. I want to walk through a product story with you. I first need to tell you a story about this. So I've been married now over 20 years, coming up on 21 years in a few months. When my wife and I got married, we lived in Colorado, then we moved to Texas for three years, to San Antonio. San Antonio tends to be kind of hot. We got suckered into this because we were walking around on the Riverwalk the day after Christmas in shorts and t-shirt and thought, wow, this is amazing, why doesn't everyone live here? Not knowing that seven months out of the year it's kind of miserable because it's so hot. Because it's so hot, we spent a lot of time going to Sonic and getting one of their big slushie things to cool down.

TAYLOR: Yes. I'm familiar with those.

CHAD: Yep. My wife loved those so much because she's an ice fan, but she's very particular about her ice. They had, I always called it bubble ice. I'm not sure if that's the name or not, but...

TAYLOR: I've never heard that one. I heard 17 different names but I've never heard that one.

CHAD: But it's that kind of softer, chewy ice, that's....your dentist would probably still tell you not to chew it, but at least it's more chewable and it kind of sucks up the flavor from whatever it's in. So we had been married two years when I learned this about my wife and thought, I wish I could get her an ice maker that would make that sort of ice. So, come along 19 years later, I see this thing on Kickstarter, for the Opal, which makes nugget ice. It sounds like this might be an option that I could use to get a present for her to make this special ice that she might like. So indeed, I backed the Kickstarter program and my Opal got delivered a couple months ago and it's sitting on our counter and my wife is enjoying her ice. Opal is a First Build product.

[13:47]

TAYLOR: Yeah, it is. Interesting how that all came about. Hopefully your audience is interested. I'll give you more of the story behind the story on that one, too. We have had nugget ice technology for five years or so. The team that developed it has been a very passionate team, trying to figure out how to get it into a refrigerator, because what GE Appliances makes are refrigerators. I was aware of what they were doing and our founder was aware of what they were doing, and the whole team felt like there was a real opportunity. We actually saw some traffic on our website that people were talking about how excited they were about nugget ice and we thought we've got to figure out a way to put this into people's homes because the technology exists, it wasn't a far thought to try and figure out how we would get it into people's homes. So we decided that probably the best, the easiest way to get into the market and find out if there was really a market for nugget ice at home was to make a countertop nugget icemaker. There were these \$150 countertop nugget icemakers that you could buy at Target or Walmart or you could find them on Amazon. They actually go on sale for \$100 around Thanksgiving. So we knew that there were countertop nugget icemakers out there, so that at least gave us a hypothetical belief that people would be willing to buy an icemaker for their countertop. The thing that we...the real

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stretch that we took was that in order for us to make this thing, the technology is actually the engine that you use to make it is cast and there are a lot of fairly expensive parts that go into it and it has to be very high reliability because people are expecting it to last for a while. We knew that we could never provide a product that's made on a low volume like First Build does for \$150. We decided that we were going to throw out what we consider to be a very high premium price in the market place that we thought would be the only way that we would be able to justify the cost of making the product. So we started just telling people, we said, number one, we specked out a product, we said it's going to hold three pounds of ice, it's going to make one pound per hour, so it'd be full in three hours. It's going to be about the size of a computer tower, and we had a model that we built up so people could see it. We told people it's going to cost \$500. To our shock, almost uniform shock, when we said \$500 there were a few people that said, no way, I just couldn't afford it. But a lot of people said, oh, \$500, that's nothing. For us, looking at the baseline of \$125 or \$150 for an ice machine and multiplying that times four seemed like a real stretch of the imagination. For the nugget ice enthusiast, it was not a stretch. I think part of that was because some of the companies who have been out there making what we call nugget ice for a long time have done a great job of building a dedicated fan base and have unfortunately not followed up with products those people could afford. So the story that we would hear over and over again from our community members was, sure, I love nugget ice but the only way I can get it is by going to Sonic and buying a bag. Literally, people go to Sonic on the weekend and buy a bag of nugget ice and they store it in the freezer and then they go back the next weekend and they repeat that every week. Sonic actually does decent business just selling ice.

[17:25]

CHAD: I had no idea they could do that.

TAYLOR: Yeah. When you heard the story the first time you thought it was an anomaly. When you heard it the 10<sup>th</sup>, or the 20<sup>th</sup> or the 50<sup>th</sup> time, you're like, okay, we're on to something here. Then the other thing was people were unusually keenly aware of what the cost of having a nugget icemaker was. We would tell people we're making this thing and they'd say, heck yeah, I'll support that for 500 bucks because it costs \$3000 to get the alternative. I don't know if there's a lot of markets where you're making a new product where your customer is already aware and sensitized to the price difference between you and your big competitor but when you've got that situation you're probably...and you can provide a product for 15% of the cost of your competitor, you know that you're in a good position. In many ways we kind of lucked into the idea. We had the technology, we had some community members who were passionate about the project and we decided we were going to back it. Quite often with First Build, the only thing we need to back a project is a hunch and the support of a few really enthusiastic people. The great thing about the way that we operate is since we are trying to operate on a minimum viable product basis, we don't need to go all the way through the development process to launch a product and make it available for sale. Indiegogo happened to be the one place where we felt like we could do that fairly easily. So instead of having to put together an entire new product introduction process, we put together a marketing campaign and a viable prototype of the product, so we knew what we could offer, we knew that we could meet the specs that we were offering and it took us about four, maybe four and a half months from the time we came up with the concept to launch the product

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available for presale on Indiegogo. It took us another year and a couple months in order to actually make and ship the product.

CHAD: And I was part of that journey and enjoyed getting the updates and seeing where things were. You talked about the power of this community. That's a very valuable resource to have, to do your product concept validation to see if this concept will go anywhere or not. Did you have any other influences besides that community that you already built?

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TAYLOR: Whenever we launch a product that we think has the potential of being a flagship product, so we launch about 12 products per year. Not all of those products do we think are going to have the same impact as other products. Some of them are really early market tests to try to find out if a concept is even viable. But in that case, we felt like we had enough information, enough feedback from people in the world that it could be a pretty big idea. So we'll do design challenges, just as an example of some other ways we get influence on our products. In this case, we had a design challenge. We got 50 designs back. Some of them very high fidelity industrial designs. One of our community members from Guadalajara won the design challenge and heavily influenced the design. That helped us get an idea for some really basic things that influence the product dramatically like the fact that it has a clear ice bucket on the outside that can be removed. It's really actually a unique innovation. In the ice space, there's really nothing out there that you can actually look in and see the level of the ice vertically increasing and know how much ice is in there. It makes the product quite a bit more attractive as well. So we are major beneficiaries of the open-innovation concept. Anytime that we can, we try and reach out to community members, whether they have design skills, engineering skills, marketing skills, or they're just an enthusiast, we actively try and find out more about them as part of our customer development process.

CHAD: For that design challenge, when you do those, are you giving specific problems that you've encountered, like...

TAYLOR: We try and give the most basic possible specification. So we tell them the things that I told you. Three pounds of ice makes one pound of ice per hour. We gave them the size of the ice engine and then we said it should probably fit within a box about this size because if it doesn't then it's going to be too big. That's about all they knew about that product and so that gives them...when an engineer sits down to design a product, they have a whole bunch of preconceived notions about what the product looks like. The great thing is you get 10 completely different concepts. You get the opportunity to choose between which one's going to be the kernel upon which you grow the whole product. For our designers, that means they get the opportunity to be heavily influential in the early part of the design phase.

CHAD: Okay, so you frame the problem pretty openly so the designers can just take it in different directions.

TAYLOR: Yeah, exactly. We really don't want to be...all we want to do, we want to give people the core value proposition, see this is what this thing is for. You tell us how you should interact with it, what it should look like, what the key user experience features and all that stuff should be.

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CHAD: What's the incentive for participating in the design challenge?

TAYLOR: Usually there's a specific monetary incentive that's associated with winning the challenge or getting a certain place. Then we also have, for design challenges in particular, especially when we plan on crowd funding a product, we'll offer the opportunity to get a certain percentage of funds from the crowd funding campaign. We didn't on the Opal icemaker. We did on a subsequent crowd funding campaign. Unfortunately, that one didn't launch, so we weren't able to pay. We wanted to pay the royalties, but the product didn't launch. We try and give really good incentives for people to get involved. We're very appreciative when we have a lot of really good feedback from community members. We see really high quality work on a regular basis.

CHAD: The use of Indiegogo...I don't know if you've been on other platforms, too, but I kind of regard them kind of generically just as the crowd sourcing approach to funding a product. How are you using that? Is it the combination of promoting the product, getting funding, testing to see if this is going to go anywhere? What are you learning through that platform?

TAYLOR: Anytime you want to sell a product, you need to have a market place. You can build that market place yourself, or you can use a market place that someone else has built. Indiegogo happened to be a very convenient place because they were very open, they have a very open business model. They don't discriminate against who can or cannot do a campaign. They've got millions of people who have purchased products, many of whom we would classify as early adopters who don't have some of the barriers to purchase that a lot of other people would. It's a great place to go to sell a new product like that. When we go to Indiegogo, we're not looking for money, we're looking for market validation and you'll even see a lot of VC funded startups. VCs will send their startups, particularly when they're product oriented startups, straight to Indiegogo or Kickstarter to prove that the product really wants to be sold. There again, they're not looking for money, either. They're really looking to prove that their startup or the company they're funding has a real product that people want, that's specified right and they know how to talk to their customers. We're doing it primarily for the market validation purposes. Indiegogo happens to be a place that was already built up as a place for early adopters. When we ran our first campaign, we'd been around for six months, so Indiegogo was a great partner in helping us get started in this space of crowd funding.

CHAD: Yeah, great place to test the waters and see who's interested in that. Opal was kind of a collision of some people in your community talking about the desire for nugget ice and having an ice engine already available to pull from and some future desire for GE to move to refrigerators that had this sort of capability. What are some other ways that First Build has run into ideas, into concepts that you pursue? What kind of research happens, or what comes about?

[25:36]

TAYLOR: The craziest ways. We are all about random collisions and a lot of serendipity can happen when you are open, when you are creative and you suppress your instincts to say no. I think instinctively as engineers, as marketers, as developers, we quite often get so used to the way things are done, that we just decide that we want to say no to many things that are not understood. At First Build, we are primarily about saying yes. When you're willing to say yes to things even when the realities of them seem really hazy and you're open to inviting anyone in to talk about an idea or to brainstorm about

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what you could make, you'll end up coming up with some stuff that really seems a bit off the wall. I'll give you an example. We had a product manager from GE Appliances who was one day discussing how they wished they had a really cool new feature for an oven. At the same time, we had been talking about smokers, what we could do with smokers. Someone said wouldn't it be cool if we could make an oven, an indoor oven that you could use as a smoker. One thing led to another and there was a guy, we had this old vintage 1950s GE Appliances refrigerator sitting around and someone said, let's build a smoker into that refrigerator. So they took the refrigeration system out and they got a smoker system and they built probably the coolest smoker I've ever seen out of a refrigerator cabinet. One thing led to another after that, we're like, what if we could build an indoor smoker that was just a self-contained unit that anyone could have sitting on their countertop. The technology behind that is pretty complicated. It's one of the ideas that's still sitting there on the back burner. Everyone knows there would be a huge market behind it. We haven't decided on the execution. Ideas like that that just kind of start as a supposition can end up with some really concrete implications that I really hope within the next year we end up, within the next two years at least, we end up with some sort of a smoker, an indoor smoker that people could use to smoke their ribs and their pork and all the stuff they want to smoke. Easy to clean, you don't have to spend all your time outside. I still don't know how it's all going to quite shake out, but if we could come up with something it certainly would be a very hot product.

CHAD: So it sounds like a lot of designs just come from collaboration and these kind of ad hoc occurrences of people looking at how could we do something new.

[28:23]

TAYLOR: Our philosophy here is a prototype is worth a thousand meetings. If something sounds compelling, the immediate instinct here is to prototype it. What you get from a prototype is instead of a written spec, isn't nearly as compelling as a prototype. You'll build it and you'll realize that you were wrong about 9 out of 10 things. The one thing you were right about was compelling enough that you want to take it to the next step. People can get really excited about a prototype, where I have tried, trust me, I think your audience will appreciate this too. I've tried to get people excited about the specs that I write. You don't really engender that much excitement about specs. They have to be written, but it's not the same as building a prototype. Since we are maker-centric we focus on building that first prototype and once we've got something, that gives us direction as to whether we proceed or we abort mission or whether we put it on the back burner for a while.

CHAD: Awesome. There's a chance I might be in Louisville next May or so and I've got to come just play in the maker space. If I'm there I'll let you know.

TAYLOR: Of course. You're welcome to come in at any time. If you came in, we'd give you the red carpet treatment.

CHAD: Very kind of you. I'm going to ask you for a quote in a little bit, but I just want to underscore I love this one you just shared, which is "A prototype is worth a thousand meetings." Lots of good wisdom in there for everyone. We should take that to heart. I wanted to ask you just about...you've been doing this a couple of years now with First Build, lots of products have gone through the line. What are you learning in terms of each time in terms of improving your process? What are you figuring out that you can do better?



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TAYLOR: A lot of what we're doing here...we started a business that had a foundation of principle alone. So, we knew what our core principles were, we wanted to be completely transparent. We wanted to be inviting to the community, we wanted to be about making first and learning from what we made and we wanted to be about allowing a community to have a voice in creating new products. All of those are great principles to build upon. Unfortunately, principles don't get the bills paid either, so we've learned to be very additive in our approach to each new product launch. Every time we launch a product, we try and do something that is currently out of bounds, something that has not been done before, at First Build, or perhaps anywhere else. When we launched our Paragon Induction Cooktop, we were a corporation figuring out how to do a crowd funding campaign. That was, if not completely unique, it was certainly something that's not very common. Every time we do something, we get better at our core business but then we also try and add some new skill or knowledge, some new tool to our arsenal so that we're a little bit better prepared for new things. We also want to keep ourselves very fresh. We've certainly made plenty of mistakes over time. I think any company that starts up is learning with limited resources and all the things they go with that is learns along the way some of the mistakes that you make. What we really try and stress is number one, now we've got a team of people, we do a process internally we call HOP. It stands for Human Organizational Performance, where we do a post-mortem without the dead body, so no one gets slaughtered in the HOP process. So we try and use our transparency principles for the good of the team and then come up with ways to operationalize things to make them work better, but we never stop trying to do something that is uncomfortable.

[32:22]

CHAD: Very good. I'm curious on the Opal product, so that was about 16 months in the making, from initial idea and out to product launch. What was the new thing that was being done there?

TAYLOR: So this is very tactical. We had done a crowd funding campaign prior to that. We'd done about \$350,000 on our induction cooktop. That's a pretty good crown funding campaign. We thought the Opal could be maybe \$500,000. We had run Google AdWords ads and had been horribly unsuccessful at it. I mean, I guess in terms of ads budgets it wasn't as unsuccessful as... I felt like it was unsuccessful but now that I know what people spend on ads, I'm like, okay, actually that was just a little test and we learned that we weren't very good at it. We really went hard on Facebook ads and we learned how valuable Facebook ads can be for a very specific type of campaign. Something, as far as I know, even GE Appliances doesn't get into very much, but we had a team that was willing to learn that and that's really what propelled Opal to where it was. In fact, if you look up nugget ice on Google, I think, as far as I know, nuggetice.com, which is our website, is the number one website and we've still got like 8 out of the 10 top links from press and stuff that's been around that. That happened to be one of the times when the thing that we tried that was new worked out really, really well for us. It caused us to have a very high SEO rating from our website, which led to organic sales, which means we don't have to spend as much money on ads. I think that's one of the many things we tried. We probably did, in our earlier days, a year ago, a year and a half ago, we would probably do 10 things differently every time and that's probably from a standpoint of experimental control, probably not the best practice, but we did a lot of things that were really new and pricing on that, we took a big risk, a big gamble on how much we were going to ask people to pay for the product and we did some cool stuff on promotional things during the campaign. There are a lot of really neat things that you can do with how you price products and when

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you crowd funding is to try and test for price sensitivity and stuff like that. I think the biggest thing we did that was a big swing that also ended up having a huge impact was those Facebook ads.

CHAD: I don't know if there's at the time, at least, if there were too many folks around GE who were messing around with Facebook ads, but that's a great example of having something that's kind of isolated, what First Build was about. You can just go play in areas that are new to you and see what works. Great example, thanks for sharing that with us. Back to that quote. So as listeners know, I always like to get a quote from my guests. What's an innovation quote that you brought for us and why did you choose that one?

[35:12]

TAYLOR: I'm very motivated by Steve Jobs and I think that in and of itself sounds a bit like a cliché, but when I heard him say this, I was watching an interview in which he said this, and it's the one thing that sticks in my mind as describing my experience that I had as I've come from working at a big corporation to working for a small company. He said, "Everything around you that you call life was made up of people that were no smarter than you and you can change it. You can influence it. You can build your own things that other people use." There's two camps of people. There are consumers and then there are makers. Once you realize that you don't have to be a consumer, you can be a maker, you realize there is a whole world of opportunities in front of you and you have, instead of being influenced you have the opportunity to influence the world around you. To me, that's really what I aspire to do every day and what First Build has really tried to aspire to do, and it really encapsulates what I think is the core of innovation and entrepreneurship.

CHAD: It is also one of my favorite quotes. I so much appreciate you sharing that. It's one that I've shared with my kids a few times, too, because I want them to have this mentality that the environment that we exist in, the rules that are there right now, were put in place by people that are no smarter than you and you should be innovative and look for ways to make positive changes and the rules indeed can be changed. Thanks for sharing the quote. How can people find out more about the work that First Build does and if they want to get more information on things?

TAYLOR: Obviously people can come to [www.firstbuild.com](http://www.firstbuild.com), which is kind of our one-stop shop for learning about our products but also about participating as community members. If you are interested in some of the stuff I've talked about, I'd be more than willing to have a one-on-one chat with some of your audience members. Reach out to me on LinkedIn. You can find me Taylor Dawson, I'm the guy who works at First Build. I don't think it will be too hard to find me but I would be more than willing to talk with people and let them learn more about the things that we're doing.

CHAD: Great. Thanks for making that available. I will put the links to the First Build website and also your LinkedIn profile in the show notes for this episode and delighted just to hear how First Build is working a little bit, how that came about in the life of GE and get to share the story of Opal some, since I'm personally connected to it also, as a product owner.

TAYLOR: We appreciate you being one of our passionate backers and I really appreciate you taking some time to have this conversation. We really need voices like yours, people who are interested and curious

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Host: Chad McAllister, PhD

Guest: Taylor Dawson

about what's going on in the world. If it weren't for guys like you, we would probably, no one would know who we are, so.

CHAD: I'm going to look forward to coming to visit the maker space as soon as I can. Thanks a lot, Taylor.

TAYLOR: Thanks, Chad.

CHAD: Thank you for listening. Please tell other product managers and innovators about this podcast. That's easy. Just go to the show notes for the summary of the discussion with Taylor and you'll find the links at the top of the page to share it on your favorite social media sites. Also, from the same page, you can download the Product Mastery Roadmap that shows you how to go from product manager to product master. All that and more is at [www.theeverydayinnovator.com/110](http://www.theeverydayinnovator.com/110). Keep innovating!