Episode Four Transcript

Making the Impossible Plausible: How Reamonn Soto Built Sensatek

Intro:

The entrepreneurial journey is rarely straightforward. It's unpredictable.
Challenging.
Collaborative.
Risky.
Transformative.
And often deeply personal.
The VentureWell Voices Podcast offers an inside look at the change makers using science and technology to solve the world's greatest challenges. Hear their stories of the messy, meaningful path from idea to impact.

Christina Tamer:
When you hear Internet of Things, you probably think of your Ring cameras, or your smart fridges, or a really cool system that turns on all the lights when you get home. But that doesn't really translate to an industry where conditions are extreme, like an energy, or aerospace, or automotive.

If you think about a machine that's spinning at 18,000 revs per minute or in temperatures of 850 degrees Celsius, very expensive cameras going into outer space, we really need the sensors that can handle those environments and be indestructible.

That's where Sensatek comes in. I have with me Reamonn Soto, the CEO and co-founder of Sensatek. Welcome, Reamonn.

Reamonn Soto:
Hey, thank you for having me, Christina. Very excited to be here to share about our journey and to answer some of the questions, to just have a conversation really about whatever we want to talk about.

Christina Tamer:
Yeah, I hope I did okay trying to explain what you do.

Reamonn Soto:
Oh, yeah. You did a great job.

Christina Tamer:
It's been a while.

Reamonn Soto:
Yes.

Christina Tamer:
What's your updated one-liner on Sensatek, the more technical one?

Reamonn Soto:
All right. Sensatek, we've brought to market some technologies available for harsh environments. One of the ones that we're really excited about is our new cloud-based AI platform that essentially takes videos from a vibrated structure, rather if it's spinning at

80,000 RPM or moving at Mach 5, we're able to help engineers visualize and analyze mechanical motion and vibration, essentially using any video source.

Christina Tamer:
Really cool. What I love about that is that it's come such a long way to integrating what the customer needs. I remember being with you in an MIT classroom that had no windows, talking about the blades, heat and vibration, and it was very much about the blade at that time. And here we are, what is it? Eight years later, you've really come a long way. You've worked with so many customers.

Can you just reflect on that delta, that journey from when you first got started to where you are now?

Reamonn Soto:
Well, yeah, it's very humbling because when I first started out, just in grad school in a lab, I came through the E-Team Stage One while I was still a student essentially, graduate student at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. It was there where I was working in the jet engine lab where we had parts that were failing at higher temperatures and no one really knew why, or it wasn't a way to really help folks really understand or identify issues early on so that you can anticipate it, you can plan around it, you can be able to not encounter so much risk.

And so, I remember coming through E-Team to where we first got exposed to the ICORE process, the whole lean startup methodology, understanding what it means to, hey, go out. Okay, you identified a problem, but who else cares about this problem? I took the curriculum, and I really forced myself to get out of my comfort zone, get out of the lab, go out there, talk to people who you don't know, and really understand the problem space a little better.

Then also it was serendipitous that I had also found a technology that was available for licensing, because one thing about being just how I'm wired, you have folks who watch things happen, you got folks who make things happen, then you got those who ask what happened. Although I encountered a problem, I also wanted to be a part of the solution.

And so, I found a technology available for licensing and it was a technology that could essentially try to detect these issues early on, problems like with jet engines, blades overheating. I found the technology and thought I had the best thing since sliced bread and

I was ready like, "Hey, here it is. I got the solution." But I didn't really understand what the journey was going to be like having to, no, now you have to prove that it works.

You have to convince them and generate the data that's reliable, and repeatable, and accurate for the customer to really adopt it. That then got us into the SBIR program, looking at National Science Foundation, SBIRs and some of the other agencies, and just really understanding what our technical risks were. I mean, putting anything inside of an engine, there's a lot of risks from how do you attach a sensor to any part, and how do you get it to stay on and collect data reliably?

There's so many risks associated with that. It was an interdisciplinary problem. We had to hire experts in material science and also in electrical engineering, even in aero structures as these things were spinning on blades, going pretty fast. Then we had to build out a lab because a lot of the capabilities that we needed just didn't exist at the time, and so we had to build and establish our own capabilities.

We piggybacked on test campaigns at Embry-Riddle on actual jet engines, and helicopter engines, and engines that were on wing, Learjets. That was exciting. That helped us reduce a lot of our risk. Woodrow Wilson said, "I not only use all the brains that I have, but all that I can borrow." And so we had to go out and build our team, even with E-Teams and with Aspire, and being able to work with VentureWell and all of the folks involved from... Of course, you, Christina, to Janine who was there at the time, and so many others who just really poured into us and who helped us to really achieve purpose through so much uncertainty.

Looking back at that journey, it's like nothing's changed. It's like you learn in writing and they're like, "Hey, it's so recursive." I think in innovation, when you have a process that's proven and it has a track record of success, you're constantly using that process over and over and over. We've rinsed and repeat from not only gas turbines used in aviation, but we've also expanded and explored other markets, like power generation using aero derivatives and gas turbines at power plants.

We were able to work with Duke Energy and Siemens Energy, and being able to commercialize our technology on an actual grid-connected turbines. Then that expanded into other applications like wind energy where we've been able to work with leaders such as the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Constellation Energy, and Invenergy, NextEra Energy Resources, and Florida Power and Light.

We've been able to work with industry leaders and not only expand our capabilities, but being able to also really understand the problem and market opportunity in these other different markets. When we first started this process, I remember just ICORE day one, day two, day three, were like, "Look, this process never ends. This is just the beginning."

It's been quite the journey, but it's like everything comes back full circle. You're always... You get more efficient in the process.

Did I answer the question?

Christina Tamer:
Yeah, and then some. I broke down a bunch of directions that we can go in. Just a huge plus one to basically, you said a Woodrow Wilson quote, "Hire people that are smarter than you." I love that. That's such a great leadership and management philosophy to take on. Everyone gets better, and you'd always want to hire people smarter than you. That's great.

You mentioned you found the patent and that was just like, that was great, so exciting. You could license it, but there was so much work to do. You could find it theoretically on the shelf, but you've described all the work that was involved with actually bringing that to market. I think that's a common misconception. You have the patent and the technology, that's one component, but there's many other things that need to be done: the team, you mentioned the lab, you mentioned the facilities, the data, the accuracy, the testing, all that.

Can you maybe just briefly reflect on when you realized the patent or the license to the patent was just one element of a lot of other work that you had to do?

Reamonn Soto:
Yeah, just reflecting on that question, I remember being with my team, and first I realized at some point the third year in, I'm like, "Wow, I'm not the smartest person at the table here." These guys... Sometimes you feel like you have that imposter syndrome a little bit because it's like, wow, you got folks who have PhDs in electrical engineering, PhDs in material science, you got one who has a PhD in materials engineering,

Everyone just has their one person who worked in the industry at an actual engine manufacturer with all these years of experience and worked on sensors on spacecraft. And so, you're sitting here, you're just trying to connect the dots. Now you realize, okay, I'm just

managing. These are the smart folks in the room. I know the right questions to ask and I just know enough to be dangerous, I guess.

I think it dawned on me when I realized how challenging this was going to be when I had my university partner in the room with our potential engine manufacturing partner, who had explained... After we had did all of our customer discovery, and we realized, oh, holy moly, we think we have product market fit here. We had a large customer at the table with our university partner, and the customer just told them everything that we needed to do in order for them to adopt and basically buy our technology to adopt it into their system and their process.

I was really excited. I'm like, "Hey guys, look, we got the team here. We're ready to rock and roll." Then soon as the customer leaves the room, my university partner, everything just fell apart. They were like, "Oh, well, we need $10 million, and we need at least four years to do this."

Christina Tamer:
Oh, four years?

Reamonn Soto:
I'm like, "What do you mean? I thought the sensor was like... Can I just take the sensor and just sell it off the shelf?" I realized, no, this was just science that was proven. This wasn't a turnkey product. I really-

Christina Tamer:
Not a product.

Reamonn Soto:
I was naive enough to think that it was turnkey. And so I'm like, $10 million in four years? I'm like, the opportunity is now.

Christina Tamer:
Yeah, there's no scenario where that works.

Reamonn Soto:
Right. So the team just fell apart a little bit, but we rebuilt, we restructured. I realized that, okay, dang, I'm going to have to build the technology on my own. I'm going to have to go at

it basically alone. I'm the person boots on the ground. My co-founder and my wife, as Azryana, we basically had to put our skills together and figure out how do we duplicate what was in the research paper? How do we duplicate what was in the patent? What equipment do we need? How do we go at it with the resources that we had?

With the E-Team program that helped us during Stage One get out there and start talking to people in E-Team Stage Two, gave us a bit of a budget to do a little bit of prototyping. We were able to use that essentially because I told the customers like, "Yeah, of course, this technology's ready. We got it right now. Let's do it." They called our bluff and they actually said, "All right, well, we have a campaign coming up. Let's just do a little demo, and so how soon can you get us sensors?"

We literally, we were overnighting ovens from MTI. We were doing samples, and I was cutting ceramics by hand. We were like, "Well, we're about to find out even if I had to Super Glue the sensor onto the unit." And so, when we did that, we were able to at least... The sensors were ugly, but they worked well enough that they began to see the potential in the technology.

Then we were able to also use that initial case study, use that data to then go out and be competitive towards a National Science Foundation, SBIR Phase One that then gave us more money to really start to build out our capabilities, overcome some of the more aggressive technical risks that our customers were showing.

Christina Tamer:
But you said about the Super Gluing, the Super Glue, that's a classic textbook entrepreneurial experience. That's the definition of a minimum viable product. We're just going to get it together, make it work the best we can using whatever materials we have, and ship it. It sounds like it worked.

Reamonn Soto:
Yeah, it did. Well, it worked well enough to just-

Christina Tamer:
Yeah, well enough.

Reamonn Soto:
... to get off first base. Of course, I didn't tell the customer it was Super Glue. I told them

what the chemical name for the bonding method, the proprietary bonding method that we used basically-

Christina Tamer:
Gorilla Glue.

Reamonn Soto:
Yeah. I was like, "Yeah, we just engineered this blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." This Loctite. So yeah, it worked well enough. Then we were able to get the Phase One, and we were able to start bringing on people who can then help us troubleshoot through some of the other milestones. Then we were able to get our Phase Two, that then allowed us to do some due diligence on 80 different material systems to find that right combination, that right mix of ceramics that we can use as an antenna to then wirelessly interrogate sensors that are on things that are high temperature and spinning pretty fast.

It was quite the... I mean, I still have... When I think about it, I have some PTSD when it comes to that, just thinking about, wow, I can't believe we did all of that and then tested it on actual jet engines, these things that... blades that are designed for nothing to stick on them, and let alone a sensor. I just think about that journey. I mean, I have a good team, and I remember still hearing you in the back of my mind when you're looking for the right person on your team, you want to look for people who's already done it before.

Sometimes there hasn't been things... You're doing things that haven't necessarily been done before, but who has that growth mindset, who has achieved purpose through uncertainty, who has been there, who has the war scars that you can also learn from? And so, I really think that's really important.

Christina Tamer:
Yeah. What I always loved about you is that every time you look up a picture of you, you're always in front of a big jet engine. You have a good brand association. I would love to take it back a little bit to the beginning and how you got started all in all this. You obviously were experiencing the problem firsthand working on those engines, but you have a really interesting background. You were in the Marine Corps.

Tell us about how your upbringing, and childhood, and early experiences all set you up for becoming an entrepreneur and leading this company.

Reamonn Soto:
Oh, wow. Down Memory Lane. I remember growing up as a kid. I'm very grateful for my mother. She was a single mother raising three kids essentially on her own while going back to school herself to earn a degree. And so, you're on a limited income just as a college student in general. I mean, now you're doing it with three kids, so you got the stereotypes associated with that that you are also having to overcome.

And so resources weren't really...

Christina Tamer:
Abundant. Yeah.

Reamonn Soto:
Right. When I say that, it makes my mom a little bit uncomfortable sometimes, but I'm like, "Mom, look, yes, we had a really good childhood. Yes, we did great. We did not go without."

Christina Tamer:
It's tough as a parent to reflect on your childhood and your kid's childhood, it's weird. I can relate. Yeah.

Reamonn Soto:
I grew up in a household without having McDonald's money, if that makes sense. But still living in that environment... One thing that was my escape I think, was seeing a space shuttle take off for the first time when we were living in Florida. This was early '90s, and I think that sparked my imagination.

Then I remember going to air shows and hearing those jet engines just roar from an F-16 that just really inspired me in flight. While all the kids were outside playing, I was mostly indoors. I was a nerd. I was inside reading encyclopedias on aviation and designing aircraft, had models that I was sketching out of encyclopedias and scaling up on tracing paper. I would wear this scientist lab coat or whatever that my mom had got at a thrift store. This was who I was.

I was playing Flight Simulator. I was part of the Flight Simulator generation. I was playing Flight Simulator, I was designing aircraft, I was designing even missile systems. I know that's scary, at eight years old, I'm designing missile systems. Because they were in encyclopedia. I was always into that. Then in middle school and high school, I struggled in science and

math classes. I had to take Algebra I twice, Algebra II twice, failed AP chemistry twice, failed AP biology twice, barely passed geometry.

And so, I thought growing up that not only was not STEM for me, but I didn't even think college was for me. There was one thing I was good at that I had an A in, and that was JROTC, Marine Corps JROTC. Science, math really was like... It just wasn't cooking for me, and so I didn't think college was for me at all. I went in... I remember September 11th, I know it was yesterday, and I remember being in high school and the world had changed.

At that point, I was like, "Yeah, I'm still not going in the Marine Corps. Marines are nuts. I don't think this stuff is tough. I don't know what I'm going to do." Then a recruiter came to me and was like, "Hey, what are you doing after high school?" I was like, "Join the Marine Corps?" I was like, "Why did I say that?" He was like, "Well, what have you done?" It was a mentor. He was a mentor as well and someone who I looked up to, and I just thought I had nothing else, so I'd say," Oh, I'm joining the Marines. "

And so, he's like, "Well, have you taken any steps? What have you done going that direction?" I was like, "Well, I haven't done anything." He's like, "Well, what are you going to do?" I was like, "Well, I guess I'll go ahead and start the process. I'll check it out." So joined, I went into the reserves because I promised my mom I would go to college, even though I had no intention. I wasn't sure how that promise was going to be fulfilled.

Went into the reserves, and I think the Marines taught me leadership, really instilled just not being afraid to fail, not being afraid. You go in there and they break you down and then build you back up. After you've been broken down for quite a bit, you realize, oh, okay, it's not so bad. The brokenness isn't so bad after all because it's in the brokenness where you find some purpose, you find heart, you find out what you're really made out of.

For me, I had drill instructors who were just really tough and just really nailed me to the cross. From that, I was resurrected a little bit just with purpose and learning what leadership's about, learning that leadership requires teamwork, learning how you don't have to do everything on your own, that you can work together with the people around you, and you can do things that are just unimaginable, things that seem impossible at first, but you can take an impossible situation and make it very plausibly possible.

It's that thinking and that relentlessness that gets you to where innovation starts to happen where it's like, "Hey, we need to do this. What if we stand on top of each other like a

pyramid and pull the tire over our heads?" That innovation, that leadership starts to come out, and you're like, "Oh, that's ridiculous, but I think it'll work." You realize, hey, okay. Then you come out in the civilian world now, and I'm like, "Wait, I think I might be able to do this, but let me first start off something small."

I started out... I went to college. I started out at a technical school. I got a trade. I was like, oh, okay. All you have to do is really pay attention. You just got to listen.

Christina Tamer:
Listening and showing up is half the work, right?

Reamonn Soto:
Right. Just showing up and just following the program. I thought I was doing that in high school. Apparently, I wasn't, but maybe I was distracted. I don't know. Then I started out, I did trade, and then there was a community college next door. I'm like, "Hey, let me go and I'm going to see what they're talking about." Because I got this thing called a financial aid refund check, and it was money that you got reimbursed after paying for everything.

I was like, "Oh, wow. Well, what am I going to do with this 400 bucks?" I was like, "Maybe I can take some more classes." I went over across the street to the community college, and I took two classes for the summer, and I buckled down, and I studied and put a lot of effort into it. I got two A's in those classes. I was like, "Oh man, maybe I can do college." The first two years of college was basically almost like a repeat of high school.

I was like, "Hey, maybe I can go back and learn some stuff." In my mind, I was a college student with a 4.0 GPA, so I chose the hardest major for me, which was physics. I was like, "You know what? I think college..." I applied at a trade school. I'm like the skill that you get from college for me was learning how to learn. I figured if I could teach myself how to learn physics, I can apply that skill to just about anything.

Christina Tamer:
I love that. Learning how to learn. That is a perfect summary. I think you brought that with you into all of the courses we've done together in the accelerator programs.

Reamonn Soto:
Absolutely. I think that's the key because you got folks who come in and they think, "Oh, I got the best thing since sliced bread," and you go out there and customers tell you that

your baby is ugly, or your product is not for them, or you're listening to what they want to... Or you have some customers who might be a little bit misleading that say, "Oh, this is great. Oh, this would help solve this big problem, but yeah, but it's not that person's problem."

So how do you discern what's for you and where's the blue skies and where are the clouds here? What story is that really telling? Then after undergrad, being a Marine, being in physics, and having opportunities to intern at national labs and then later on Capitol Hill, just trying to bring those soft skills with those hard skills to be able to really be a better leader, and not necessarily being out there in the forefront.

A lot of times, you're leading processes, you're leading yourself, you're leading your Fire Team, your two or three-member team, and you're leading your teachers, you're negotiating-

Christina Tamer:
Managing.

Reamonn Soto:
... homework. Right. Right. Exactly. So yeah, it's just been that... Then going on to grad school, and then being an entrepreneur, just choosing that path was, I think, pretty interesting within itself.

All right, did I answer the question?

Christina Tamer:
Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I'm sure your mom is super proud of you now. Thanks for sharing everything that you experienced and love. Thinking about you reading an encyclopedia, wearing a little lab coat, that's really sweet. And of course, thank you for your service. It sounds like you got a lot out of that, and all of this came together to make you who you are. And now, you're leading a team of seven, you have customers all over the country. Yeah, it's a big deal. You've come a really long way.

What's Sensatek on the cusp of now? What's your big focus or what are you excited about at the company?

Reamonn Soto:
Oh, man. What we're really focused on, what we're really excited about is just the future. I

know you see all these startups, and you see folks in Forbes, and you see Fast Company. Me and my co-founder, we always joke about it. We're like, "Yeah, we chose a startup. Why did we choose startup life?" People think that, oh, this is an opportunity to get some passive income, or this is an opportunity to really diversify their portfolio, and I want to dabble in it.

But they don't know the price that you have to really pay to actually do it. Folks are like, "What does it take to be an entrepreneur?" I tell them, "Look, it takes all. It takes everything you've got: maxed out credit cards, taking loans out against the house when you really believe in what you're doing." I mean, these are very uncomfortable things, decisions that have to be made.

And so, you're seeing... Two years ago, when we first started, you saw Shark Tank, you saw all these different things that made entrepreneurship look like it was trendy. It seemed pretty cool. But then we went through COVID, then we went through where there was just a lot of capital just being thrown out there, a lot of money. Then you see other startups now just coming in, raising money at these very high valuations. You think you're being smart by saying, "No, I'm not going to do that. I'm going to just stay focused and focus on customer traction."

Then you find yourself in a Valley of Death situation where now capital's hard to come by, and you have VCs, and you have interest rates that have went up and now, the venture environment just started shrink up a bit. You're having tough conversations, and we had to restructure a bit and lay off 80% of our team members, and reduce our footprint in our lab, and have uncomfortable conversations with lenders, and that sort of thing.

And so, you look at the last two years, you have folks who started out with you who are no longer there. You have some folks who started out with you, who's gotten acquired. But you notice that the mood has changed a little bit. There's more uncertainty in the startup ecosystem, and so how do you still achieve purpose? I really think leadership is the ability to achieve purpose through uncertainty.

Now with all these different headwinds, how do you still look for the silver lining? It's a silver lining that is not just you just see it and it's like, "Oh, there's a silver lining," but it's two years, it's been two and a half years that you've been navigating this Valley of Death where you've just spend really just... How do I say this still in friendly terms? You're not

scrapping by, but you're just really dug in. You're in the trenches and it's just you're waiting for that next big break, and it just seems like it just doesn't happen.

Then a year goes by, and another year goes by. Then you start questioning yourself, "Am I walking this line?" There's a fine line between being relentless and reckless. And so you're like, "Am I on the relentless side here, or do I really need to think differently about this whole entrepreneurship thing?" Then you look at your milestones, you look at your KPIs and you realize, well, hey, look, we're still hitting our KPIs. We're still moving. We're still eating.

We haven't gotten a raise. I haven't been able to pay off my credit card debt. I'm on interest-only payments, but those interest-only payments are still getting paid. Lenders are still working with you, supporters and folks who've invested in you are still working with you. You're like, all right. Customers are still saying, "Hey, come take data off of my system. Give me insights. Here's the purchase order."

Christina Tamer:
Can we dig in on that?

Reamonn Soto:
For sure, yeah.

Christina Tamer:
Can you share a little bit about a customer success story in particular, the impact and how does that keep you going?

Reamonn Soto:
Yeah, so man, that's a really good question. I think part of when you're dug in the trenches and you're just like, "Hey, am I maneuvering too much? Am I doing too much?" I feel like a scrambling quarterback at times. Then you get a customer like Constellation Energy and Invenergy, and they come in and they had an opportunity to invest in 12 different companies, and they're like, "Hey, both of us are going to invest only in one company and we're going to invest in Sensatek."

One of the things that they said as to why they did that was that, "You came in and you really sought to understand what our... You came to learn about how our business works, how we make money and what our priorities were, and you adapted your solution and

your capability around that to help us solve our problem. You weren't married to the problem that you thought, and even your technology coming in."

It made me feel like all that gymnastics that I was doing, like customer discovery, customer validation, MVP design development, just kind of... What do you call it? Thin slicing the technology in a way to say, "Hey, did I hear this right?" Just spoonfeeding it a little bit. You just start thinking, "Maybe I'm just doing too much." But then for them to come in and say, "We're going to invest in you and we're going to now do a paid demonstration across four different power sites, and we're going to start looking at all our other nuclear assets, and our oil and gas assets," as they just acquired one of the largest oil and gas producers.

And so, it's like when you start to see that and then you see other people then come to the table and do business with you as a result of that, that's the highlight that makes you... I remember when they first told me that, I was trying to hold back tears because you're just back in Marine Land, whatever. It's like artillery just constantly just bombarding you and you're just stuck in your trench. And it's like, where do you go from here?

Being able to now have a clear direction where we can tell the rest of the troops like, "Hey, we got to run here. Hey, it's not going to be easy. There's still some obstacles here. There's still a lot of risk, but we just got to keep our head down and just be smart about it and just keep moving forward." That gave us an opportunity to get to the next milestone where we were able to then regroup, rethink, and rededicate.

What makes me excited now is that having that win, the world of AI, AI is just like, it's a big buzzword right now, but we've been able to leverage the investment from these large energy companies to... We leveraged AI in a way. We found more technology out of the national lab that ended up disrupting our current technology that we had before.

And so, we licensed it, developed it, built it out, then sliced it to our customers, and they came and said, "Look, from now on, don't even talk about the other sensor, only talk about this one. Oh, and here's a check too." That helped. We're using now pixels. We created a video-based measurement system that essentially uses pixels captured from any video camera with principal component analysis and blind source separation. That's our patented AI method that processes high resolution pixel vibration data and automatically separates all of the different pixels into its mode of motion.

What that means is that whether they're using rotating equipment, or structures, or blades, helicopter blades, hypersonics, they're able to use video from cameras they already have to generate insights in a much easier, simplified way than having to physically attach something. We're able to provide those insights almost instantaneously. It's attracted folks, not only our energy customers, but also now Boeing and Lockheed Martin. On the structure side, they're at the table.

And so, we're really excited about that. That's our next trajectory because everyone's talking about AI, but we have patented AI. We're not just using ChatGPT. I wish I could.

Christina Tamer:
Yeah. That's a great example of the technology is going to change. The technology's going to advance. You have to just keep moving on the tech to serve and solve the customer's problems. You've tuned into that so well that you're not overly married and blind to the customer need in favor of your technology. That's living the responsiveness and the whole idea behind everything's going to change, lean innovation, technology will catch up and evolve, but as long as you are committed to keeping your finger on the pulse of what your customers need, you'll be good.

Reamonn Soto:
Right.

Christina Tamer:
That's how I think you've been able to get through those hard times that you've had over the years. It's a lot, Reamonn. There's a lot there. Yeah.

Reamonn Soto:
Thank you.

Christina Tamer:
In my last few minutes here, I guess with all of this, what do you do to take care of yourself?

Reamonn Soto:
Oh, man. What do I do to take care of myself? Oh, that's a good question. What I do to take care of myself, I always commit to learning. When I feel like I'm learning... Because when things start to feel like they're routine, you can get stagnant. And so, one of the things that I started doing is I pursue executive education. I'm in the master's program in finance at

Harvard University's graduate extension school, and so that now allows me to further build on what I'm doing with Sensatek.

For instance, in my corporate finance class, my professor was a past CFO at one of Honeywell's divisions. I was able, as a part of my project and class, I had to determine what the net present value and the internal rate of return of our technology would be to a large engine manufacturer. I had to brief the presidents of Siemens, Africa, North America, South America, all in the same room. I had to basically brief them on what the internal rate of return or the net present value of adopting our technology into their fleet, whatever it would mean.

But my Honeywell CFO professor helped me prepare and graded me on my paper, and I was prepared for that brief. Being able to still work with... pursue some education to help complement what I'm doing in the field, that's helped me to stay sharp and not get stagnant. Also, exercising. I started working out a little bit more whenever I can. I also coach baseball for my six-year-old. That really... If you're not sure if you are a leader, go coach a bunch of six to eight-year-olds. They'll bring it out of you.

You'll start realizing, "Hey, I didn't realize I think like that. Oh, wow." You're encouraging-

Christina Tamer:
Running around with bats? Yeah, and trying to get them to listen to you.

Reamonn Soto:
Yeah, that's been helpful. Then of course, my wife and I, we're very active in our church community. It's been a lot of prayers, a lot of support, and that's helped us to really remind us what faith is about and how important it is. Even if you can't see it coming, but to still just have faith and keep sowing, keep investing, keep planting those seeds, and what you believe in. That's been helpful.

Christina Tamer:
Yeah. Well, I think that's a great note to end on. I've learned a lot from you over the years, and I learned a lot just from this conversation. I really admire you, and your work, and your leadership. I think that was sort of the theme of what came out of this. There's a lot of ways you could be a great leader, and always staying in learning mode is, I think, the key to that in how you've become so successful. So thank you for sharing all this with me, and give my best to the family as well.

Reamonn Soto:
Hey, will do. Thank you, Christina, for the opportunity. Just thank you for all the support that you provide and continue to provide. I really appreciate you and appreciate the work that you're doing. Thank you for your leadership.

Christina Tamer:
Thank you. That's so sweet. I know we've known each other for a long time, but I am excited to see where you keep going. I know this is just the beginning.

Reamonn Soto:
Thank you.