**Channel Mastery Podcast, Episode #87: Kristin Carpenter Interviews**

**Christian Schauf, founder and CEO of Uncharted Supply Co.**

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Kristin: Welcome everybody to another episode of the channel mastery podcast. I am so excited to introduce a revered Verde client today as well as an incredible entrepreneur, Christian Schauf who is the CEO and Founder of Uncharted Supply Company. Welcome to the show.

Christian: Thank you. Honored to be here as always.

Kristin: It's awesome to have you here. I mean I've been wanting to have you on this podcast for a long time and today we have the great opportunity to talk about what it's going to be like for you take your successful direct first brand into a hybrid distribution model.

Kristin: And we're going to go through all kinds of things around what that's going to look like, with the forthcoming Outdoor Retailer show. But before we do that let's rewind a little bit and let's tee up the founding story of Uncharted and your background because I think it really sets great table stakes for our conversation around expansion and opportunity.

Christian: Yeah thanks, that's a great introduction. You know I always kind of have this weird feeling that I was put here to do this. And that's because my personal story just dovetails, everything in my life is dovetailed into Uncharted. So you know my backstory. I grew up on a farm in Wisconsin. But not a typical farm. We had 2500 acres of crops, but my parents also had a bio-diesel plant. We were doing all sorts of genetic work, clones, embryo transfers.

Christian: My grandpa started a shipping business where they'd truck woodchips from the mills in Northern Minnesota back and use it as animal bedding. So we had all these like businesses running. It was very entrepreneurial mixed with straight up blue-collar work. I mean this is maybe a little personal but I had hernia surgery at 11 because I didn't play little league, I threw hay bales all summer that weighed more than I did.

Christian: That's just how we grew up. So you had this like really hard work ethic mixed with a lot of creativity and I think that just, was absorbed into me. Went to University of Wisconsin, got a couple of degrees, started playing in a band for 10 years after that and did some work on the side at ad agencies and stuff, I was always interested in marketing.

Christian: But as the band kept growing I mean I've recorded with Prince, we shared a practice space with Soul Asylum. I wrote a lot of our albums with Phil Solem who's famous for writing “I'll Be There For You,” the *Friends* theme. And just we were in that circle for a while. We played for 10 years, 30 or 40 countries and towards the end of it we got asked, we were down at some place south west and got asked to play for troops overseas. And we just said sure, let's go.

Christian: So that fast forward turned into 40 trips to Iraq, our band played 150 shows which is a record to anyone's estimations. Nobody’s ever been there more, done more but the interesting thing was on the second trip over we learned that there were 350 bases roughly in Iraq and they were only getting bands to like 30 or 40 of them. The reason being it was too dangerous to convoy and they didn't have landing strips at these bases.

Christian: So the helicopter is the only way in and bands have too much gear for helicopters. So my brother and I went back to the drawing board and basically devised a PA system, a speaker system that would fit into a Black Hawk which allowed us to service 300 bases they weren't able to get to before and so for the next half a decade my brother and I were just, they call it fob hopping. We would fly into Iraq and it was our band or somebody else’s band and we took the Pussycat Dolls, System of a Down, and the Spin Doctors and all these bands you've heard of and we would guide them around war zones.

Kristin: That's amazing.

Christian: It was. I look back at it almost like it's like a movie I saw once. It's just so hard to believe. Like I had my 30th birthday party in Saddam Hussein’s bedroom. You know that was just like what we were doing. We did this thing call Bikes over Baghdad. We took X Games over and built skate parks at bases and you know we'd leave bikes behind for troops and so to make a short story long, you know I was kind of an outdoors adventure guy. We were doing all this military stuff.

Christian: The military thing was rolling. I helped start a company called Crisp and Cider when I was home. That was acquired by Miller Coors. And interesting sidenote to that. That was at a time when craft beers were just exploding and Joe Heron came to me and said, but nobody's doing craft cider. And while the craft cider markets one percent or whatever it's still like a $300 million industry. So if we can own that it's a pretty cool opportunity.

Christian: So a great learning for me. I was learning entrepreneurship, I was going in war zones, when I was home I was running marathons, and hunting and skiing. But I took a job in California as a VP of Marketing at a fitness app company and I decided to drive to Steamboat Springs one New Years to go skiing. It snowed two inches in the mountains behind Orange County. And I sat for eight hours while people around me were just stuck.

Christian: They were just completely beside themselves, going into the ditch with their Prius in flip flops. And I'm heading up [Highway] 150 with all my gear, with my buddies stuck for eight hours for two inches of snow that would not even make me flinch normally.

Christian: And it was just this moment where I was like, I realized that I was around different type of person for the first time in my life. You know I'd been around farmers and military and it was just like, whatever had to be done you got it done, you figured it out and nothing felt insurmountable.

Christian: And it just made me realize that, I'm not saying people are dumb or weak, they just, they're inexperienced. People are growing up in big cities and they want to be adventurous but the biggest adventure that they have is driving from L.A. to Mammoth and they might have some snow at Lone Pine. I mean it's getting to be pretty low barriers that keep people away from kind of what's normal.

Christian: So I went back to L.A. after that trip and really started digging into like what is going on here, emergencies are on the rise, life skills are diminishing, and there's nothing out there that really speaks to solving this problem. And that's where Uncharted started.

Christian: So that's a little background on me. I hope that wasn't too deep but it kind of gives you the background of like what we're trying to accomplish here and the real kind of authentic way it started.

Kristin: Well I just, first of all pretty much the most entertaining introduction that any guest has ever offered on Channel Mastery so thank you. And I literally can almost see my audience like as they're working out or driving or doing what they do when they listen to this show. Just kind of like wondering if they should hit rewind and listen to something again because there's a lot there. But I think the takeaway for the sake of our conversation, huge vision, creativity and I love what you said about like military and farming background. You just figure it out, right.

Kristin: But when you're looking at the general population of people and how they're raised to be in comfort and now let's look at just consumers for example, they're raised to have no friction, you know everything at their fingertips, choice, everything like it's all handed to them and so what I feel like you might have felt in terms of a vision initially was like, what can I do to enable these people to be ready for whatever’s thrown their way.

Kristin: Frankly because it's not going to stay the same.

Christian: It's true and there's so many indicators that this is happening. I mean I'm not trying to rag on mud runs in any way but it's funny to me that people will pay money to go run five miles through a farm field just to feel alive, just to get muddy and have something to push against.

Christian: If they're living in a world of Amazon Prime and Siri and navigation systems and everything that just gives you information and solves problems for you. Everything is on demand. And Uber, I mean Uber's crazy. I was in L.A. one time and I had, I was friends with the guys in the Minnesota Wild Hockey team and they were playing the Kings and I had two tickets and I invited my buddy.

Christian: And it was sprinkling. And he was like, I can't come I can't get an Uber. And he lives like six blocks away from the, and I'm like, you're really going to miss like hanging out in the locker room with the team because you can't figure out how to get six blocks in the rain? I mean what are we coming to here. So you know you look at these David Goggins books that are coming out and you know the Joe Rogan podcasts and the kind of resurgence of the athlete hunter type things. And I just think people are reacting now to this like, we've just gotten so comfortable and there's no reason for that.

Christian: To me it's uncomfortable and I think this is a little way to kind of help that. To kind of give people the superhero cape that makes them feel empowered to face what they didn't think they could.

Kristin: Alright so tell us exactly what it is, like what was the lightning rod moment when you came up with the actual product? And then we'll talk about how you went to market.

Christian: Sure well we started with one product. And we're building a bunch more, which we can talk about in a minute, but you know really I went home and I called all my friends that I worked with. I talked with special forces guys, and bush pilots and doctors and you know my buddy Eric Meyer who's on our team now that has climbed Everest a bunch of times and saved a bunch of lives up on K2 and I asked them all the same question.

Christian: I'm like I don't want to know what you do for you because you're an expert but like what would you give your kids if you weren't there to protect them, that you knew was so brain dead and so effective that it would be a game changer?

Christian: And that really came back to what we called a 72, which is the 72-hour survival kit. And I know that people go write to preppers and like John Goodman and 10 Cloverfield Lane.

Kristin: And Militia.

Christian: Yeah, it's very military, it's very like bunker. It's kind of fearful like put your head in the sand and that wasn't our approach. Our approach was like, these are the things you need to take a potentially dangerous situation and make it an inconvenience. It's really quite simple when you break it down, if you're looking what FEMA suggests or ready.gov and our goal was to build not only a curated kit that was really high quality but also add instruction and organization.

Christian: Because what was in the market was very commodity based. You go to the military surplus store and you pay $70 for some really crappy nylon backpack with a bunch of junk in it.

Kristin: I thought mine was in an ammo can.

Christian: Well many an ammo can, but you could run a couple of miles with an ammo can and tell me if that's the best solution.

Kristin: Exactly.

Christian: There's just, it was very antiquated, it wasn't thought out well and nobody had really thought about this. And the thing that I learned a lot in going to Iraq, 'cause when we go to these bases, people would, they always give us these demos where they'd put us in a room and fill it with smoke and have us find our way out. Or I'd go with the seals and we'd bob to the bottom of the water and tie knots with our legs and hands tied together. You know when you get senses taken away from you everything changes.

Christian: It's really easy to look at a backpack full of stuff and open it up in the daylight and go, oh there's the first aid kit. But if an earthquake happened and your house is filling with smoke, and the doorframe is so you can't get out of your bedroom and it's dark, suddenly things change really quickly.

Christian: So for us it was organization, it was instruction, and it was really easy to use stuff. On top of that, the last point I'll add is people like to call these “go bags,” I call them a “go to bag.” I mean how many times do you forget gloves or a hat? Or sunscreen? Or you just need a Band-Aid or a multi tool or tweezer? So many people who buy our products are just like, oh I dig into this thing all the time. I thought I'd use it just in case there's an earthquake but it’s actually something that helps me navigate every day.

Kristin: Right, and so you're, essentially I see it as almost empowering people to step outside of their comfort zones.

Christian: That's exactly it. We always say this is the superhero's cape. It's the thing you have in your car and when people see it they go, oh you're prepared, I'm coming with you. It should be a point of pride. It should be enabling, it shouldn't be fear. And that's what we're trying to change here with this model.

Kristin: Okay and let's talk, speaking of having no fear, let's talk about how you launched this. So tell us from the point of inception, like you now have a product. How did you consider going to market?

Christian: Yeah I'm kind of a burn the ships kind of guy. I realize that if I always have a lot of ideas, and when I finally get one that I really think has legs I make it really hard for me to unwind what I've put myself into.

Christian: And I think that's a powerful kind of commitment moment.

Kristin: Absolutely.

Christian: Yeah I built this kit, you know I'd done other business things but I'd never really built a product. And it took a long time to find people that would help me create how to organize this. And create the bag, and it took me maybe a year to get it together. And I actually remember I was getting very close on the prototype and I called up Joe Heron, the guy I started Crispin with and I said hey look at this thing.

Christian: And he goes, what are your sales? And I said sales? Like I just got this together yesterday, probably two or three months. He's like if you don't have any sales you don't have a company. He's like you have to go faster.

Christian: And Joe can be very raw but man, I hear his voice every day in one way or another. And he's right at his core. So I was like man, this guy’s right. So I sold my town home in Minneapolis, I bought a thousand units of inventory and then I set an Indiegogo campaign up. And the reason being was, it was September-October, and I wanted to deliver by Christmas, thinking that was a good moment where people were going to be buying gifts.

Christian: And if there was a time this year to do it, it was now, and I had to go fast. So you know I committed several hundred thousand dollars of my own money into ordering inventory, I stored it all in my 1,100-square-foot apartment in Venice, California until it got overflowing and then I bought a space and I turned on the Indiegogo campaign and did my best to launch it, never doing this before.

Christian: And away we went. So we launched November 1st of 2016, I had ordered a thousand units, I guaranteed that we would ship any orders before Christmas, so it's November 1st, I have two months right, thinking we'd sell maybe 300 units. And we sold 13 hundred and some units. So now I had a problem of actually building them and understanding how to ship to like Australia and Belize and Japan and Russia and customs and those were some of the hardest, craziest and most fun days of my life.

Christian: But that was a wild couple of months.

Kristin: Well I have to, this is probably a little different than some of the shows you've been on, and just so everybody knows, I'll have links to other podcasts that's Christian's been on, and some articles 'cause yeah there's, the more you listen to Christian talk the more you hear even more stories. They're as amazing as the ones he's told. But this is obviously a podcast about helping, especially businesses be remarkable to their end consumer during a time when the end consumers preferences are changing all the time, right.

Kristin: So you chose Indiegogo over Kickstarter, sounds like it was a very robust platform, I mean you really found a lot of traction on that platform, obviously. What was the step you took after that, were you able to kind of maintain those relationships, did you kind of turn and look at like what's next in terms of the next platform, what did you choose?

Christian: Yeah well to be honest we had built an online store ahead of Indiegogo. And then kind of turned it off to drive all the sales to Indiegogo. If you know how that works, the more sales you have the more traction you get, the more exposure you get. So it is advantageous to drive there.

Christian: So we did that, to be honest when the campaign ended we were oversold. I had to figure out how to order more inventory, there was a gap between when the campaign's over and when you get paid. And there was a little bit of like crawling out of this amazing hole we found ourselves in.

Christian: So you know it's Q1, things have slowed down, we're fulfilling, we're kind of learning about how to do the taxes and everything else and all these little things that come with you know having a half a million dollars in sales in like two months. And we started selling again. You know we started pushing our website, sort of buying a few ads here and there but we got to a point where I think it was in June, that Shark Tank called and that was kind of the next big moment for us.

Kristin: So June 2017 was when they reached out to you. Tell us about that process. We are going to get into wholesale expansion here everyone but this story is just too good to miss [00:19:10] frankly I think it's all tied to the energy surrounding the brand and the products that are about to be launched at the show, so tell us about Shark Tank.

Christian: Yeah so Shark Tank was amazing. They reached out. Actually Mike Escamilla is a friend of mine, he's a professional BMX rider and stuntman and he had an agent that had a phone number of the casting director at Shark Tank and we got on a call with her and she just kind of said quickly yeah, sounds cool, send me a video and I'll look at it and that's all I promise.

Christian: So we really went to work for a few weeks making the craziest video we can and I can send you a link to that.

Kristin: That would be great.

Christian: You could share it if you want. But we quickly realized they're trying to make a TV show, you know so let's make this really fun. And we did all sorts of crazy stuff, it'll make you laugh when you see it but it got us on the show. We went through several rounds of kind of the elimination rounds until we got invited to L.A. and then we get to L.A. and we're supposed to film on a Sunday and they said oh you're going to go on Friday morning.

Kristin: Oh God.

Christian: It felt like they were constantly messing with us. We'd get there at like 4 am, we'd sit in our trailer, and you'll be filming by noon and yeah it's like 4 pm and we're still sitting in our trailer and they were like, well it's not going to happen today we'll send you home and I'm like, tomorrow? And they're like no maybe November.

Kristin: Oh my gosh.

Christian: There was just this constant, like we're sitting there with mikes on, hair and makeup is done in the green room, to go next and they're like yeah it's getting tight, they're done at five. I don't think you're going to go and if that's not the case you'll come back in maybe in a half a year. It was that crazy until we are, until they're like oh, they're done, okay get out there, get behind the door and as everybody knows those doors open you're on. It was literally that fast. So a very fun experience, it was nerve wracking but I really enjoyed it.

Kristin: Tell us what like some of the questions were, like one or two that the sharks lateraled over to you.

Christian: You know, the questions are pretty expected. If you go on Google you can just type in Shark Tank questions, and there's a list of them. I think the thing people don't realize, though, is you're standing there, and those five people are all asking you a question at the same time demanding your attention.

Kristin: Right.

Christian: You look at Robert Herjavec to answer him. Lori is literally saying, "Excuse me, I asked you a question," at the same time realizing there's about 15 cameras on you, so it's a bit of a pressure cooker. And being able to kind of manage these fastballs that are coming at you, that's the one thing they don't show. Another favorite tidbit I like to tell people is when they took us through kind of the rehearsals the day before they told you to walk in, you stand here for two minutes. And don't talk to the sharks. Don't say anything. Just stand there.

Christian: We went home, and we were talking about that, and we're like, "That's where they get all those super pregnant pauses when a shark asks a question, and then it cuts to this person who's just stone faced like scared out of his mind." So our goal was to walk in and just smile for two minutes and nod and do everything we could to make us not look like they just caught us in some question we couldn't answer. There's a lot of fun little techniques that we kind of developed as we got closer. It was a really fun experience.

Kristin: You are fearless, literally. I just got nervous even hearing you talk about the way that you had to wait and then, boom, you're going. But that's fantastic, and again to my audience I think that a salient point to bring up around both of these experiences with Indiegogo and with Shark Tank is you started to build quite an audience and own that audience and obviously you're serving them with your content and with your own storefront at Uncharted Supply Co, and the website, right? So talk about how you have used content and how you're building this audience because I feel like that's going to be a perfect lead-in for us to talk about why you're considering brick and mortar going forward.

Christian: Yeah, well the last company I was at, and I'm not going to name names, but I remember standing at trade shows knowing that the product we were selling that, like, 30% of them were broken in the box. And I brought this up several times, and they were like, "Well, there's nothing we can do about it." I hated that. I just hated it. I hated that the device wouldn't connect to your phone and that people were having problems and that the brand kind of was soulless. It was designed by an agency by some guys that saw a trend in the marketplace and wanted to take advantage of it. I just thought it was kind of BS.

Christian: So we have two people ... We're adding a lot of people in the next month here, but I have two employees. One is customer service, and one is content. Since day one that's been the deal. Anybody that comes into the fold we will answer questions until we're blue in the face, and we are constantly doing everything we can to not only show how our products work and how to use them most effectively but how to navigate this or that or here's how we think about this thing. I just think that's the right thing to do.

Christian: Consumers are really smart. They sniff through any kind of fake anything, and I think if you stand a chance at standing apart you just really have to be authentic good or bad. That's kind of our goal here. As you heard from my backstory this isn't some fictitious thing I made up. I've spent a lot of time in war zones and on mountain tops and on elk hunts in the middle of nowhere, and this stuff all kind of educates us to do this better. And I think that really comes through.

Kristin: Well, and when you say authentic obviously we work closely with messaging, positioning. It's been super fun working with you, just so you know, because you literally are always just sprinting towards something, and you never wait. You know what I mean? It's not like, "Oh, we have to wait until these five things are done or we have to get legal to sign off on this." Oh, no, no, it is literally like, "We see the vision, and we make it happen."

Christian: A point to that. I used to play this hockey game on Nintendo called ice hockey. I don't know how many people listening are familiar with this, but there was basically three characters you would get. There was this really big fat guy, there was a middle-sized guy, and there was a little tiny guy, and the tiny guy was super fast, but if the fat guy hit him he'd go flying. And the fat guy once he had the puck you could not get it away from him, but he was so slow, and it took three or four little guys to get the puck away. And I always think of that like we are the little guy, and our only advantage is speed. So when people start relaxing and cruising it drives me crazy because we're basically giving up at that point. I think the only thing we can do is go faster and learn along the way.

Kristin: Okay, so that is actually an absolutely perfect point for us to start talking about the expansion because ultimately I think that you're coming into what people in specialty in the market that you're going to be first putting wholesale in, which is outdoor specialty, right. There is a little bit of a complacency going on in the category that I think that they would traditionally put you in. I know you're planning on coming at this with your own approach, but obviously there is a little bit of a blueprint that you have to graft yourself onto until there's a little bit of trust built or an understanding. And obviously we're going to get to all that in terms of the team that you're building.

Kristin: And where I'm going with this is what you're building and one of your ... You say that your big attribute is speed. I say it's knowing your consumer and getting that consumer what they need no matter what as fast as you can. And it doesn't mean you're rushing through product design and development. It means that you don't have to go through traditional gatekeepers, if you will, to create what it is that they want. And I think that they're learning to trust you with your content. You're going one-to-one instead of one-to-many, and you're not trying to make efficiency around a category. You're innovating. And that's something that I think the category that you could be put into ... I'm not saying that's where you're going to be put into, but a buyer might look at it that way, so we have to really go here because this is the point of disruption on this podcast is this is a product for a consumer. This is not a product for a category at retail. And I feel like your big, big, big attribute is knowing your consumer.

Christian: You know I was filling out the outdoor retailer booth information today, and you have to check these boxes on what category you're in, and I literally stopped and looked at my guys, and I'm like, "There's not one category here that fits us."

Kristin: Right.

Christian: That's an opportunity. That's not a hurdle. It's a bit of a hurdle if people don't see the vision, but for me I'm like, "Wow, what an amazing opportunity that literally there isn't even a box in the outdoor retailer show to check that actually fits who we are."

Kristin: Do you want to say what that box would be or maybe a couple of the boxes and what they would be? What a fantastic thing you just shared.

Christian: I am still searching for the right word. I think the easy word is preparedness. A funny anecdote to that, my friend, Cassidy, started TriggerPoint, the foam roller company. And when I started this he said, "You know, Christian, you and I are basically in the same business. It's prevention. We have to get people to buy into the idea of taking care of something before it happens so it's not way worse." For him it's like you don't want to blow a hamstring and then we out a month on your season. So you're going to foam roll every night. For us it's the same, but even more dire consequences. You want to make sure you have the right stuff because an air mask during those California wildfires is a massive game changer. You didn't have to spend anything more than $25, but what a difference that makes if you just thought ahead a little. So preparedness is the most logical word right now, but in an effort to rethink everything I'm still trying to find a better word, but that's probably good for today.

Kristin: Right, I agree, and I just want everyone listening to let's all take a moment and reflect on the fact that he had to fill out a form with boxes that would show where he fits into the platform that the trade show is creating because ultimately that to me stifles innovation right then and there. It's not that you're making it change what you do, but I'm going to be honest. I've had clients over the years who have designed products to fit into an assortment at a major retailer, period, the end. They didn't design it because they were inspired. Sure, the company was inspiration, the founder's story. But in order to grow and in order to get into certain retailers they've designed products that would help that retailer electrify this particular part of their store. And I feel like that's actually the problem now. We aren't letting the consumer drive. We're looking at what the trade show is making available.

Christian: I think it's a Peter Field book where it's the whatever of one. I read it. I can't remember it now, but the idea being there's only one first to market. And then everybody else is the Google of-

Kristin: The fast follower.

Christian: The GoPro of this, yeah. I do think this is a really special opportunity. It definitely creates some challenges. Even going into ... We're in a few retail stores here in Park City. These guys have been great, Jans, White Pine, Silver Star. They've said, "Yeah, we'll take your products," and they literally go, "Where should we put this thing in here?" But I just think that's a very simple hurdle to get over for a lot of upside, which is very exciting for us and for them.

Kristin: Right. And then I also think again you have been building an audience that understands who you are, that is aware of the product. And I think that that also can mitigate the risk of where does this fit in my store because ultimately you're helping to create demand. You're investing in content to do that. And what we obviously do at Verde is content as well when we get placements and such. That's all content. And it helps people understand like the online consumer research process. And now you've had some stores that I would consider beta, the stores that are in your area. Obviously you're Park City headquarters. You have some stores right around you that are testing, and you're learning from that. And you've got the big show coming up here in June in just a few weeks, so let's talk about some of the things that you're planning to do.

Kristin: I feel like the way that you would have outlined success at the end of a three-month period throughout our relationship would look a certain way until right now, and now it's going to look different because you're incorporating a lot of new leadership, not a lot of new products but a really cool collection of new products, and then some refs in order to actually fluently fit into this space and bring and incredible opportunity for growth to this space around preparedness.

Christian: Yeah, I think what I could touch on first is why we're transitioning away from call it 90 some percent direct to consumer. I think Facebook has its own problems with keeping their audience. I think as inventory keeps getting more and more scarce prices go up. People are getting kind of it. Used to be you'd mute the commercials on TV, and I feel like people are getting used to just flipping by them on Instagram. So it has its own inherent challenges where maybe at the beginning those things kind of people just stopped to look, and now I think there's a slow decay there. I think it's always going to be a viable channel if you will, but sitting there I think is very short-sighted and only doing that. It was a great place to start though because we have a huge audience now. We have a huge e-mail list.

Christian: We have tons of followers, and people are saying, "Where can I go buy one of these things? Where can I touch it, feel it?" Just the 72 alone that's 35 pieces in a backpack. That's a really hard thing to get across to somebody and to let them understand the value in one Instagram picture. So being at a store people can touch it and feel it and open it up and actually experience it is a game changer for us. To a person people are always like, "Oh, now I see why this is better. Oh, it's really light. Oh, this material is really thick. It's nicer than my Patagonia bag." Right, that's what we're doing, but that stuff is really hard to translate in a quick Instagram ad like I said.

Christian: That's an important part of our business, but I think if we would've started in stores there would have been a whole other bunch of challenges because you kind of get this product out there ahead of the marketing, and people don't know what it is. They're not interested in exploring it. They don't know what the 72 is or they don't go, "Hey, have I seen that logo before or did I see these guys on Shark Tank," or whatever. It's just I've been with companies before where you put something on the shelf, and if you haven't done a good job of informing the customers in that area that it's there it comes right back to you. So for us the idea was let's build the audience. Let's get our cost of goods down. Let's improve the quality. Let's learn what people are saying about it and what they're asking for and develop extensions off of that. And then we go to retail, and we're not just this single product, but we're actually a brand with a suite of products that help solve problems.

Christian: That's what we've been really working towards that last year and a half. People if you look from the outside it's like, "Oh, they have a website, and they're selling these one or two products," but we've been building over half a dozen new products we're going to launch in June. And I think they expand our brand. They bring in new audiences. They go from below $50 to above $500, and they have the opportunity to sit in specialty retail, specialty outdoor. They have an opportunity to sit in like the Malibu boat deal down in Salt Lake is selling a bunch of our products right now. It's going to help our brand grow in a lot of different ways.

Kristin: We don't have to only focus on outdoor, but obviously we are talking about you debuting it at the Outdoor Retailer Summer Market. I just want to say let's look at preparedness. Let's look at the value equation that a really good brick and mortar retailer, specialty retailer in our markets offers to its community is preparedness, whether it is back country skiing, whether it is backpacking, whether it is trail running you go there to get the beta. You go there to get the gear. You go there usually to figure out, "Okay, I've got this guidebook, but have you been on this? What are the trail conditions? What gear am I going to need on this route?" It's all about preparedness.

Christian: Yeah 100%.

Kristin: What you're bringing in I think underpins the whole thing, and the new product that you're bringing, I think, brings more of a niche approach on some levels but then a larger approach on others, so it's a very interesting expansion opportunity for outdoor.

Christian: Yeah, what I always think about is market space not marketplace, so I love a good Gore-Tex shell. I'm a geek for outdoor gear, and if I could pick anything to build I'd build really cool jackets and gloves and stuff like that. But, man, then you've got to compete with some pretty big monsters out there. For me when I looked at like if you picture going down a grocery store aisle there's this gap where there's a bunch of people selling Gore-Tex jackets, and there's a bunch of people selling mountain bike helmets, and there's a bunch of people selling elbow pads, but nobody's selling the stuff that we're building. Like I said, it's market space not marketplace.

Christian: It's like there's an education component that we now have to give the customer to perform, but at the same time it's such an opportunity. The difference between camping and survival is like one thing you choose to do on the weekends, and the other one just kind of drops in your lap one day. But it's all the same mindset, it's the same gear, it's lightweight stuff that you can trust, that you know how to use quickly, that you can set up in the dark. All those things that make a really good camping kit is the same. It's just we've positioned it different and thought a little bit different about how it works in a scary situation versus next to a river somewhere. And now we have a wide open lane to operate in.

Kristin: Can you give us a little bit of a foreshadowing on some of the new products, and then we'll talk about some of your new team members after that?

Christian: Sure. I'll talk about this one. We have a kit that we're coming out with that we call the triage kit. The 72, people go, "Do I go camping with this thing?" It's like no, it more stays in your car or your house, and if something happens you grab it and go. But what we had a lot of people looking for was how do we take your products with us when we're doing things? So we did a market research and worked with a really great design firm to come up with this super simple, very small kit. And it's a little bit bigger than an iPhone. It's an envelope. Half of it is first aid, and the other half is gear repair. And our kind of research showed, and everybody would agree with this if you're going mountain biking or hiking or skiing for a day a first aid kit should be designed to either let you keep going or get down the mountain to more substantial medical attention, right?

Kristin: Right.

Christian: So why are these kits selling kits with 20 Band-Aids. It's weighing you down. It's clunky. Unless you build your own there wasn't a real good solution. But the big learning in this was like, "Gosh, the thing that happens more frequently is your gear breaks." And when your gear breaks if your mountain bike breaks, and you're 10 miles from home or if your touring binding breaks, and you're in the backcountry in deep powder a mile from your car that's a game changer. Now you're looking at nightfall. You're looking at dropping temperatures. You're looking at maybe getting lost because you can't ... I mean, there's a cascade of events that can happen that put you in a bad situation, and nobody was really building a kit that could repair gear and repair yourself in a package that can literally fit in your front pocket or your jersey pocket or whatever.

Christian: So we worked really had to make this thing that just feels really good in your hand. It's one of those things when you hold it you're like ... I hate to compare us to Apple, but it's like one of those things where it's like it's so simple it's like why hasn't this existed before. And it's going to be sub $50 price point. We made it so we can white label them so if a bike shop wants to put their logo on it they can. We just kind of thought the whole way through this, and we're really excited about that one. That's probably the most simple thing we're doing, but it's one that I think is going to have massive adoption and just kind of be a fun product for us.

Kristin: Absolutely, and I think it also will help a store look like they understand their end consumer more.

Christian: Totally. I'm lucky enough to live in a mountain town, but most people are visiting. They come in. They've got a weekend. Maybe they have all the gear, maybe they don't, but I think the last thing they do when they sling in is make sure they've got everything they need. They look at the conditions. They look at if you're skiing it's like what's the forecast or if you're going camping is it going to rain. It's like what are the last things they need. And I think when something is at that price point that checks a bunch of boxes I think it's a no brainer. It can really drive a lot of sales, and not only drive sales but really make a difference in the field for the end consumer too.

Kristin: Well, and think about the excitement of the shop sales floor people who will literally be like, "Of course I'm using that." I just feel like it's a no brainer in that it is exactly what people would build themselves if they didn't have the opportunity to buy it. If you could put a logo on it or whatever it seems like it's going to be a really cool identify piece.

Christian: And that's the thing is that people were building these kits, but these were people that get to live and breathe mountain life day in, day out, and they create these kits over time because they go out and they don't have something, and next time they add it. And for somebody that's coming in that wants and experience, and they have four days or three days to just be able to grab this and know that it was created at such a high level I think is a really powerful proposition.

Kristin: Absolutely. So now you've explained obviously the 72 and the Triage. Give us an example of one more that's kind of maybe in the middle.

Christian: We are coming out with a couple new 72s this year that will have some different use cases, a professional model designed for somebody that's maybe out helping others, a more small lightweight model for smaller frames, maybe women and children, a lower price point there. One of the products we're very excited about though, and I don't want to allude to too much. We're working really hard to make sure it comes out by [inaudible 00:41:16], and it's going to be up against the clock on this one. It's a pack raft that the prototype we have right now weighs under three pounds. It literally fits inside of our Big Nalgene bottle we have here at the office. It holds 400 pounds when inflated, and it inflates in under a minute with no other tools.

Kristin: Wow.

Christian: So you're looking at something that literally we took a picture of it next to a loaf of Wonder bread the other day, and the bread is bigger and almost the same weight. And this quickly turns into this raft that if you're talking about a Katrina type event where somebody needs a quick flotation or you're talking about a hunter that needs to haul some game down a river or you're talking about. Just somebody that wants to ride their bike up and go fly fishing on some lake and just coast out, or just put it up in a pool. There's a bunch of different audiences for this. We're making different color ways to match those audiences, and it's just really cool.

Kristin: That is cool. So we're talking about this and my hope is that the people listening will see expansion. They will see, "Okay, this does fit here, but it also brings attention from a lot of other places." This is with your audience at Uncharted, that you've already built, and the new product collection that you have. You will, in my opinion, be bringing new consumers into your new retails doors. In my opinion, they're going to discover it online, they're going to hear about it from a friend, obviously word of mouth marketing is becoming more and more powerful today as things continue to change with how we're getting people to discover our products and everything. But, you're actually going to be bringing, I think, new people into these doors because of the premise behind your brand, your audience, et cetera.

Christian: I've always been jealous of Oakley, right? Because you put something on your face with their logo on it, it's so visible. Our Seventy2 is something that people put in their trunk or their basement or their closet. So one of the things that was at the top of the list for anything we were doing was something that people would put in their hands and be using it a lot, or it was hypervisible. A bright red [inaudible 00:43:23]. We've got some other secrets I'm not ready to let go yet, but it's basically going to illuminate at night. It's just going to glow. It's going to be amazing. So you see that one time, you're going to wonder what the heck that was and where you can get one. Once you understand that, "Oh, my gosh. I can just put this in my pocket and carry it down to the river? I gotta have it." So to your point, the word of mouth, the use cases of somebody on a trail pulling it out to help you and then you go back and you go, "Oh, my gosh. I'm buying 10 of these for all my friends for Christmas."

Kristin: Exactly.

Christian: There's' a lot of that built into this.

Kristin: Right, and that I think, is the reason why as such a young company, you have attracted some incredible talent. So I now that we can't talk about all of them and everybody, you can definitely, as you're subscribing to the show here or following Verde's feed, we will be putting the news out on this in the next few weeks. We have some things we can be putting the news out on this in the next few weeks.

Kristin: We have some things we can talk about today. But, will you talk a little bit about some of the... I mean, I literally am incredulous at some of the people that you've attracted into the company.

Christian: I kind of can't believe it, and it's just one of those moments where I'm like, "We're definitely on the right path," 'cause there's no other way to explain how this is all happening. I told somebody the other day, I'm like, "I don't know if we're Ocean’s Eleven or the Cleveland Browns right now," because we just pulled off getting this team together, that we have no business having. I can't talk to all of them, but where I can start is, we just hired Ryan Houser [00:44:47], who's going to be head of creative for us. Ryan started a company called Paul Frank, which was a pretty well known fashion accessories brand, launched out of southern California, in the late '80s, early '90s, kind of thing. Very successful. Before that, he was the head of PR for Mossimo.

Christian: I literally was paired up with Ryan at the Camp Pendleton mud run like seven or eights years ago. We're all part of this big group that all got invited and they said, "You four go with that team," and we've been friends ever since. It's funny because for how different we are, we're the same. He just moved his family from Orange County to Boise. He's all about being uncomfortable. He's all about pushing life and understanding what it takes to transcend things. He's always training, he's always thinking about things, and he's a hyper creative guy. From the car he drives to the pants he wears, he just gets it.

Kristin: He built a brand that is a global powerhouse, from nothing.

Christian: He had 30 plus Paul Frank stores by the time he was 30 years old.

Kristin: That's amazing.

Christian: That's amazing. So I've got this guy now, as I'm bringing all these products up, he's thinking about, "Well, how do they all tie in? What colorways do we pick? How do the logos sit on all these things? How do we talk about these?" When we're going really fast, having somebody with that much experience is just hyper important and I'm really thankful to have him.

Kristin: Right. He knows how to speak to the consumer, I think.

Christian: Totally. He's been down this, he also launched a company called Athletic Recon, which is one of my favorite brands ever, they didn't make it. Ryan was on my podcast a couple weeks ago and I said, "Ryan, you couldn't have picked a harder battle, going up against Nike and Under Armor and Lululemon and all those." I still think he had a better product, I just think that that was a hard path to attack at that point, and I think he was a little head of the game, actually. Which isn't always a bad thing. So he's got a lot of experience from going small to big and doing it again and we're just so excited to have him on board.

Kristin: Another commonality, I don't think he has a hell of a lot of fear, either.

Christian: No, he doesn't. He was out here the other day and he was like, "You training much?" He's like, "Want to go run?" It's like raining sideways, so I'm like, "I love this guy. This is great." It's always iron sharpens iron. I really just appreciate having that around.

Kristin: Awesome. He's, I think, officially announced, "This is something we can talk about in this particular podcast," which drops prior to Outdoor Retailer, just in case people are picking this up later. More news will be coming around the corner, but let's talk a little bit about the wholesale team.

Christian: Yeah, so we're always trying to do things different too, right? So I hired a kid... A kid, he's still a couple years younger than me, his name's Jordan Parise. I actually had a lot of friends that were his friends. I'd never met Jordan. His brother, Zach, was a captain in the Olympic hockey team a couple Olympics, Zach Parise. Jordan was a pro hockey player. They got into medical device sales and was killing it, but it was very much golden handcuffs and Jordan was a guy who was like, "Nope, this is not the life I want. I want to live out West, I want to be in the mountains, I want to build something. I want to build something on my own."

Christian: His DNA is a lot like Ryan and I's, he's going to be new to the industry but he's... I don't know how many times in the last two months as we've been working on getting on board, he's like, "Just tell me what I have to do to make money and I'm going to make a lot of money." As you know, medical device guys get paid very well and we're a start up, and I'm like, "Hey man, we can't match that, but I can promise you opportunity." He's like, "I'm in. I'm on board and we're going to kill this." So he's just the right type of person that's going to onboard quickly and we're really excited to have him two.

Kristin: I also have to say, and he'll see this, he's already seen it, the way to that path... by the way, saying a wholesale team was not the right way to say it. Everything is a small, tight team. You guys are definitely not like a siloed company in any way, shape or form.

Christian: We're actually working out of my basement right.

Kristin: Yeah, I've been to the basement.

Christian: We signed a lease. We're getting an office June 1st. It's a big move for us, but up until now, we're doing a pretty fair amount of sales out of the basement of my house. Which is really fun when investors show up, expecting to walk into an office. They look confused when they knock on the door. It's very funny.

Kristin: Good. Well where I was going to go with that is, he's going to see that being the partner that's profitable, that brings innovation, that brings new consumers to this expansion, is what's going to make money for everyone. It's going to raise the level of the ocean for all the boats, and I'm not being Pollyanna. I'm happy he comes from outside of the industry. I really am. He's going to shake it up, and I think it's also smart that you're pairing some people who have chops in the industry too, from a rep standpoint, and you're going to be very selective about the doors that you open. You have to select the doors that are really going to amplify what your brand is here to do.

Christian: I've always really believed in the person more than the resume. I think all these guys at their core are just really smart, hungry, hard working, authentic, honest, trustworthy people. I think the rest can be learned, but I'd rather have that than somebody who can really speak the game and wants to do it the way everybody's always done it, and maybe you don't know about the rest. So yeah, that's a decision we make. "Hey, this is who you're going to hang out with every day, and who you're going to go to battle with." I always tell people, "I want to build a special forces team. Not an Army that I have to manage." I want to have a team-

Kristin: I love that.

Christian: Where everybody knows what they're doing, everybody's got everybody's back, we're all putting in the extra effort but we're going to be rewarded for that, hopefully. Versus a head count of 40 way too early and we have to hire an HR person, we have to manage personnel issues. Maybe that goes back to the farm upbringing, but that's how I think about it.

Kristin: Right. Another innovator who I worked with over the years, Nicholas Woodman, we worked for him for six years at GoPro. You remind me a lot of him, except thankfully you don't hold... We would literally do our calls at 4:30 in the morning because he worked at night. He was like a-

Christian: Oh, wow.

Kristin: Yeah. Literally. That was when we would check in.

Christian: I've met Nick a few times. That's humbling, to even be in the same voice. He's, obviously, hyper-successful. I have a little to of friends at GoPro and that's... I mean, what an amazing company to watch that go from a waterproof housing and a Velcro strap to what it is today. I mean, incredible.

Kristin: I walked around the SnowSports Industries of America show, the bike show and the outdoor show, with that on my wrist. My partner Julie Evans and I, and literally people looked at us like, "What in God's name?" I feel like that is innovation waiting to happen. It's just right there. It's on the verge and I just have such a soft spot. I think I have a sense too, and I just wanted to be part of this. The second I could raise my hand to join, I wanted Verde to be there with you.

Christian: I mean, I will just turn this on you a little bit and say, thank you. Because I think every step of the way, the best thing I can do is get people to buy into what I see the future being. Again, like Jordan, not being able to pay him what he's used to getting. Or you guys, you could have other clients, obviously. We're not the biggest paying client on your roster by far, but right away you said, "Hey, let's grow this thing and let's make it that." That's what I want. My goal is to make this a really big story and the people that get in early and buy in and, I don't want to say suffer, but maybe go above and beyond early because they see the future, I want those people to be rewarded. That's just how I've always operated.

Kristin: That's specialty. Thank you for saying that, but that is specialty. Honestly, specialty has an opportunity to partner with you, right now. To become more of a specialty destination. I literally see it, especially when you look at the foundation and the underpinnings of preparedness. Right? The way that you're approaching it, to tie into certain consumer demographics that we know are out people in outdoor and these other specialty markets. I feel like this is the type of product that is literally something you'll get the opportunity to partner with. You just don't get that anymore, you really don't. It's all about competing for space of the four way waterfall. Going back to the apparel example. I've worked with brands that are like, "We want to basically bridge up to the main five pack and be part of that palatine."

Kristin: I've sat in these strat planning meetings and that is a hard run. It always leads with product. You're leading with product and community. You're leading with content. I just feel like you're bringing an all inclusive opportunity that's going to drive new people into stores and enable them to join a tribe there, frankly. You know? Like, "Finally, someone who gets me." They're going to hold it up in their hand and be like, "Finally."

Christian: Yeah. We are hungry and young and aggressive and maybe, maybe a little uneducated in how the system works, but we're not stupid. We had a call with who I think is going to be kind of a rep for us coming up. I think it's probably a little early to mention them, but they're asking me questions and I was literally like, "I have no idea, you guys. But if you tell me what works for you, we will get it done." The thing he said back to me is, "I know this sounds crazy, but I believe you." I'm like, "Well, you should believe me. I'm not out here to lie to you." But I think to your point, yeah. We need specialty. When we were doing Crispin, the gatekeeper was the bartender, right?

Kristin: Yeah.

Christian: People come in and they look at the taps. They go, "Huh," and the bartender goes, "Have you tried this? Try it and here's why." I think that's the same reason that, especially in the outdoor places and specialty outdoor stores, are so important. Because you can't buy a ski boot online and understand the differences by looking at pictures. You can see weight and everything thing else, but how does it fit on your foot? I think the same goes for so many of those products, ours too. If somebody's coming and saying, "I'm going on this X adventure, what do I need?" And somebody says, "Well hey, this is what I use and why." That's a huge moment for a brand, to own that space and the person on the floors that's helping guide these people. We want to be that brand.

Kristin: Right. I also just have to say, recently I did a podcast with Mark Schaefer who's written a number of books, and I'll put links to all of that in the podcast notes too, but he has a new book out called Marketing Rebellion. Of course I love reading everything I can, listening to everything I can. His is a very simple premise that I think your brand really makes an opportunity for. For the consumer, but also for all of your points of distribution and that is, you have a brand that is really human. You've humanized it. If you were to look at preparedness, let's say, because that's the box that we might want to check, I can't say there's another brand that you would quote, compete with, that has such a human story and something you can join. I can turn to your content and I can see, "That's me, that totally makes sense to me. I can identify with this person and this dog going backcountry skiing," or whatever it is.

Kristin: But what I think that you're bringing to this, and it's not in one category, hear me, but it's the brand. You have humanized the brand. That happen, I think, from Indiegogo. You were literally in the trenches, working with people on social media 24 hours a day the entire time that campaign was happening. That's the way those things work and you learned to be in lock step with your consumer. Then going to Shark Tank after that and spending the time you have building the audience, listening to them, engaging them, bringing them the content that they want and the researches they want. That's just as important today as innovating on a product. It really is.

Christian: It is. Shark Tank always is famous for people bringing in these products in. They're like, "Congratulations, you solved a problem nobody has." I've been in so many investor meetings at this point and talking to journalists and all this and people go, "Who's your audience?" While I can tell you the demographics of who buys our stuff, I literally believe that it's every person in the world. You don't have to be an outdoor enthusiast. I mean, unless you're going to stay in the safest room in the word your entire life, the odds are you're going to come across something at some point where this is going to significantly help you.

Christian: So the scale and the opportunity to this is massive. The audience is so wide. It's so exciting. For me it's like, "How do we get all these ideas out the door and onto shelves?" I mean, I always tell people, "I am not Mother Teresa, I want to make sure I make money." But at the same time, money was never enough. I've read enough books and watched enough stuff. Rich isn't the answer. You want to leave your mark on the world. You want to make the world a safe place, and this brand allows us to live this fun life up here in Park City and work really hard and do something that I truly believe is making the world safe at a time where it needs it. I just think, who can't get behind that message? It's a pretty quote, our DNA, I think.

Kristin: Right. I think you've identified the external psychologic factor for buying the internal one, as I want to explore more. I want to have experiences. I want to be set up to do that.

Christian: Well, we live in an Instagram culture where the best photo is better than money, right?

Kristin: Yep.

Christian: At the same time, people are a little less prepared to climb to those places or drive to those places, or get to those places where those pictures can happen. So let's empower people to explore the word in a safe way. At the end, that's the beautiful thing that we're trying to do here.

Kristin: Right. It's been so great. Again, I wanted to have you on the show since we started working together.

Christian: Ah, thank you.

Kristin: We picked the perfect time, though. We really did. For my audience, this was the pinnacle moment because I've been researching, "How can I bring a show to my audience about a direct first brand that has great product, that's built an audience, that's ready to expand thoughtfully into specialty retail?" I'm so grateful I was able to do it with our very own client, Uncharted Supply Company, and you, Christian. So thank you, so much.

Christian: Thank you. No, thanks for having us. I hope everybody comes and says hi to our... I'm going to be there 24/7.

Kristin: He will, he's not kidding. Also, because it's important, tell us where we can learn more about you.

Christian: Yeah, of course. We're on all the channels, Instagram, it's just @unchartedsupplyco. Mine's @ChristianSchauf. If you really want something special, my dog Baron, the Swiss Mountain dog, he's our mascot and that's a lot of fun too. Of course if you just... We're an online company. If you type in Uncharted Supply, the Seventy2, you're probably going to find us somewhere in there.

Kristin: Will Baron be at Outdoor Retailer?

Christian: Oh, wow.

Kristin: You can get him a badge.

Christian: Let's make it happen.

Kristin: Because he is truly a draw everybody. He is fabulous.

Christian: He's 120 pounds of puppy. He can be somewhat destructive by accident, so I'll think about that, but that would be pretty fun.

Kristin: It would. All right, well everybody, keep an eye out for that and thank you again, so much. It's just been amazing talking with you. I feel inspired and I've been working with you for a while now, so I hope that my audience just got a huge dose of stoke today. Thank you.

Christian: Awe, thank you. Appreciate it.

Kristin: Yep, and we'll see you there in June.

Christian: Okay.