



# channel mastery

## Channel Mastery Podcast, Episode #112: Tapping into the Vehicle-Supported Adventure Community with Frank Ledwell of OutdoorX4

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Kristin: Welcome back my friends to another episode of the Channel Mastery Podcast. I am so excited to introduce today to you, Frank Ledwell who is the editor-in-chief and founder of OutdoorX4 Magazine. Welcome to the show, Frank, it's great to have you here.

Frank: Oh, thank you Kristin. And I'm excited to be joining you.

Kristin: And here we are, as we're wrapping up 2019, I know that many of Verde's clients have their eye on, obviously on growth and expansion for next year, but there's a little bit of a Captain Obvious, and some of them are targeting this and some of them aren't, and that is vehicle-supported adventure. And as most of my listeners have heard me talk about many times on the show, with the outdoor recreation economy in full swing and the offices of outdoor recreation standing up in so many states, and the national conversation around that in Washington, the advocacy, the lobbying, everything that's going on, and the huge, huge, I mean, triple digits, billion, like \$800+ billion-dollar valuation that all of our industries have together. Not valuation, I guess, is the wrong word, but you know what I'm saying.

Basically, we now have the right, the lane, there's no red lights at all between brands that might have sold in the past, human-supported adventure versus vehicle-supported adventure. And P.S. the Captain Obvious part, we've been driving to trail heads for many, many years or ski areas, etc. so Frank has this amazing magazine that's a leading publication in the vehicle-supported industry, and I wanted to have him on the show today so that we could talk about this consumer, how to get in front of them genuinely, how to really, I think, engage them to grow your reach in 2020.

And with that, Frank, if you could give us a little bit of your background, and why you started OutdoorX4 Magazine, that would be awesome. And then we'll go from there.

Frank: Absolutely. Well, Kristin, thanks again for having me here. Just briefly telling you about my history. My passion for outdoors, the seed for it was really started when I was a kid, Boy Scouts. And as I got older, went off to college, I had the pleasure of spending a summer working in Estes Park, Colorado. And it was that summer, the summer of '99, so literally 20 years ago, that me and my best friends from school, we spent the summer working in the mountains. And I hiked every day, I climbed every day, riding bikes every

day. We went to trail heads. Everywhere that we went, we did it in a Jeep, the Jeep vehicle.

And it was at that time that I was like, "Wow, I really love being outdoors." And I went, graduated from college, I had a corporate career and on the side, I had, because of my experience during that summer work in Colorado, I began writing and doing photography and sharing those experiences of being outdoors, and using vehicles as a means to get to a trailhead to go do these various activities that we all enjoy. I eventually turned all of that into what has now become OutdoorX4 Magazine.

Regarding OutdoorX4, our mission from the very beginning, and it started with my experiences 20 years ago, was that there was not really a magazine on the market that really captured the essence of outdoors recreation and vehicle-based adventure travel. And I started thinking about it. And I was like, "You know, anybody and everybody who's doing something outdoors related is using a vehicle to get to a trail head, whether it's accessing a national forest and going hiking or biking or paddling." Whatever it is outdoors, there wasn't really anybody capturing that essence.

It was either focused exclusively on vehicle and overland travel or outdoors adventure. And so when I started OutdoorX4 Magazine in 2013, the goal was to create a crossover, and to create some solidarity between these two marketplaces. Because at the end of the day, like I said, virtually everybody's using some sort of vehicle to get to a trailhead to enjoy being outside.

Kristin: That's perfect. And I'm so happy that you exist, number one. So thank you for creating this publication because I really feel like it's the link, everybody. So this podcast, thankfully, reaches a lot of specialty markets, but obviously we were founded in the outdoor active lifestyle markets of outdoors, snow, cycling, adventure travel, endurance, etc. But the principles behind this can apply to any specialty brand looking to genuinely expand into a new market. And in the case of this, I mean, with vehicle supported versus human powered, it's not... I mean, it is a little bit of a new market in terms of brands and retailers potentially, like creating a genuine place for this consumer to come.

But I feel like it's just been what we've done for so long, and now all of a sudden, it's not something we... We can talk about it openly. I've seen in Patagonia's catalog, they have a lot of vehicles-supported adventure depicted in those pages now. As I said, several of our brands are either in this or looking to expand, are exhibiting at Overland Expo. And then basically, we can talk about the crossover that you've seen at the outdoor retailer shows that you've attended. But it does still feel like there's a silo, and ultimately, today we want to kick that down together.

So let's start by helping the audience understand what overlanding is. Because dear audience, I was sitting here doing my rehearsal call with Frank, and he in a very polite way, corrected me because I was talking about overlanding. And he's like, "We need to actually define what that is because it's not being used in... I think like it's a general term that actually needs to be niched a little bit more." Can you explain a little bit about what you mean by that because I think it's important for any specialty brand who wants to

show up authentically, genuinely in that space.

Frank: Absolutely. And that's I think a really great way to start this off, what is overlanding? I like to think of overlanding as basically blending a road trip with backpacking. Where the journey as the destination is wholly self-sufficient, and the vehicle platform is designed to be wholly self-sufficient while on an adventure. So in terms of backpacking and how that relates to backpacking, vehicles have a limited amount of space in them. I mean, you've got your interior cargo space, you have roof space so you can put things on a roof rack. You're having to be very cognizant about how you're filling that space because your vehicle is truly the tool to get you from one area to another area over a couple of days, over a couple of months, or even over a couple of years.

And that really, in essence is what overlanding is. Now, with OutdoorX4, we've, as I mentioned earlier, our goal has always been to try to capture and bring together the vehicle component to the adventure, and the outdoors component to the adventure. And so our magazine is really a hybrid that includes overlanding, this kind of a wholly self-sufficient form of vehicle travel, but also arrive at a more a general vehicle-based adventure platform, which is what I think the vast majority of your clients and companies within the outdoors market are really trying to tap into, which is more vehicle-based adventure, where, sure you may have a vehicle or an adventure that's focused specifically on overland travel where it's just about the vehicle and traveling to some remote destination, or a myriad of remote destinations over a long period of time.

But also, a lot of us are really just using a vehicle as a tool, as a form of utility to get somewhere to go and enjoy a weekend or a week-long trip in a remote area, to go mountain biking or hiking or paddling and doing all these various outdoor activities. So at the end of the day, overlanding is essentially backpacking with a vehicle. And vehicle-based adventure, which is a much broader demographic, that is really the use of vehicles as a tool to get out and do all these forums of outdoor recreation activities. Does it make sense?

Kristin: It totally does. And that's very, very helpful. And I appreciate that so much. It may seem like we're getting almost too base here, everybody, but again, especially brands, it is our job to do our homework and show up in the most genuine way we can to this consumer. So, let's talk about news in the overlanding or vehicle-based adventure, market and community. So obviously, the main show that I've been to and that Verde's been attending for the past two years is Overland Expo, West and East.

Why don't we start there? Why don't we talk about that? Would you consider that to be the main consumer show in your opinion?

Frank: Absolutely. From an overlanding vehicle-based adventure perspective, the Overland Expo events are really an excellent space to not only experience what overland and vehicle-based travel is all about, but really get immersed in it. The beauty of those events is that the focus has really... Well, stepping back, Overland Expo was designed to introduce people to the world of vehicle-based travel. And over the course of a three-day weekend, there are seminars, there are training classes, there's a film show

that occurs over the course of the weekend with different films about people and their adventures and the places that they've been.

It's a truly immersive experience for those who are interested in using their vehicle to go to explore the world around them. And there's no doubt that Overland Expo is an excellent platform for people to get immersed in this vehicle-based lifestyle.

Kristin: Right. And I understand SEMA is really important. And then let's talk a little bit about some of the news in terms of that show before we get into the Overland News, Overland Expo News. Let's talk about SEMA and any other major draw shows in your opinion that people might want to have in their calendars for 2020.

Frank: Well, interestingly enough, SEMA is like the polar opposite of Outdoor Retailer, but they're all a lot of really interesting things that tie the two together. For years, SEMA, which is known as the... it's short for the Specialty Equipment Manufacturers Association. It's the largest event of its kind, definitely North America and probably in the entire world, that highlights vehicles and the aftermarket component of vehicles. SEMA historically has had a focus on the sedans and race cars and trucks and all sorts of... pretty much every single vehicle that you find on the road. That's what SEMA has been focused on.

This year, a whole new section of the SEMA show was opened up called the Overland Experience. And during the course of the week at SEMA, which occurred earlier this month in Las Vegas, the Overland Experience was a section of the show that was created in conjunction with Overland Expo, who I mentioned a little while ago, and a group called TORA, which is the Truck Off-Road Alliance, where they highlighted, within the vehicle segment the Overland impact and Overland vehicles that are related to the things that we're talking about now, getting out and exploring.

And so there was a whole section of the show that featured vehicles that were built for outdoor recreation and for wholly self-sufficient travel. And that was, front and center, the biggest news that came out of the SEMA, was having a section of the show devoted to overland, which we saw earlier this year, Outdoor Retailer finally had a section of the outdoor retailer show that also highlighted its own little area specific to overland.

Kristin: Yup. I saw that as well. It's interesting because I think they could have done a better job, and I'm sure they will in year two, educating people around the resource that that was, having been attending that show since the dawn of time. They come up with great programming, but sometimes they forget to tell people about it, they just assume that we're going to be reading the emails and checking out the website. But a lot of my clients were like, "Great, there's a merchandise display there, but I don't really see what this means to me," right?

Frank: Yeah. That is exactly right.

Kristin: And another thing I was going to point out is, we've had success working with Devaki and Rich Hill over at the Grassroots Outdoor Alliance for one of their future shows, setting up something similar for a really solid group of independently-owned brick-and-mortar outdoor specialty stores. Again, that's the Grassroots Outdoor Alliance. So that's another place in 2020 where I think we're going to see additional

opportunity to see how this could roll into our existing branding content, etc, and distribution. So cool. Let's talk real quickly about the change in hands of Overland Expo at the earlier time in this year that we discussed in our rehearsal call.

Frank: Sure. So Overland Expo, the event originated back in 2007 or 2008, I believe. I think it was 2008. And when it was first started, it was started by enthusiasts, like OutdoorX4 was. There were a handful of vendors at the first Overland Expo. The original Overland Expo show was held just South of Tucson in Arizona. And over the subsequent 10 years, the event literally grew from a handful of vendors and a handful of attendees to an event that now sees over 20,000 people over the course of a three-day weekend, with nearly 400 vendors onsite, with food trucks. It's an immersive experience.

Earlier this year, back in January, the original owners of Overland Expo sold the company. They sold Overland Expo to an events company named Lodestone Events, which is based out of Indianapolis, Indiana, I believe. And Lodestone hosted the first show of which they took ownership of, earlier this year in May at the annual Overland Expo West Event held in Flagstaff, Arizona. And again, it was a three day weekend that was fully immersive with classes, and vendors, and films, and just a host of various things within the show that really make it such a special place to go for a consumer learning about this market.

Kristin: That's awesome. And then I will put the links in the show notes, everybody, to Lodestone Events because they have a little press area on their website and they talk about another one coming up in 2020 called Four Wheeler Adventure Expo, that I believe taps into the very, very popular area that is Northern San Diego County, the OC, Orange County and Los Angeles. I know that there's a just a ton of enthusiasts that live in and around that area. So there's going to be a show there March 7th and 8th, that is, will be at the Orange County Fair and Events Center, it says. I'll put this link in there so you guys can read all about it.

We've often seen companies go and walk shows to get a feel for it. And it sounds like if that's what you're doing or where you are in your specialty business in terms of trying to expand to reach this consumer, you'll have a lot of options. And so you can read about that in the show notes. So Frank, can we also spend a little bit of time, because my listener comes here to learn about how to hack their channels, whether it's content or product distribution. What does distribution look like for vehicle-based adventure companies? And I understand there's a little bit of a segmentation there. Verde had a interesting project earlier this year with the RV Industry Association.

We had to do a bunch of surveying with more traditional RV retailers, dealers, and that was very telling. Every single person on the brand and the retail side was very eager to evolve, they just didn't really feel like they knew how to do that. So I know that that's an industry or a distribution channel in transition, but that's a little bit different than what we're talking about here. RV is very different from what Frank's magazine, I think reaches. It's not that it tells them not to... you're not allowed to read this. I think anybody who loves to be outdoors and loves vehicles would find value in your publication, so I'm not at all saying that, but you're more of an enthusiast, like somebody who likes to DIY stuff, belong to communities online, and just any chance they get, go explore in their vehicle. And that doesn't have to be an RV. So let's talk a

little bit about distribution and what you see in your area of focus with OutdoorX4. How are brands putting their content out there? How are they creating audiences? And where do audiences go and look and feel and touch the product, and then ultimately convert and buy the product?

Frank: Well, I think first and foremost, you have to start off with what the brand is trying to achieve. And through channels like OutdoorX4 and really in permeating to the vehicle-based market, it's all about selling lifestyle. A lot of folks, quite honestly are sitting behind a desk during the day. They've got a day job, they have their responsibilities during the day, and they're looking for an outlet to go and spend a weekend or a week long or even a month long somewhere. And so by basically showcasing products and branding products in a way where you're highlighting lifestyle, real lifestyle opportunity, that's what creates engagement.

And through our channels, that's our primary goal of our editorial, has been to highlight the lifestyle of getting out and immersing yourself when you have the opportunity to, with the natural world. And there's an aspect of genuinity that comes from that. When people pick up a copy of OutdoorX4 per se and they see family or a young couple or an older couple or an individual getting out and experiencing the natural world in using products that...a lot of outdoors companies don't realize that a lot of the products that are used on the vehicle side are products that their consumers in the outdoors have been using for years. We've found ways to integrate those products into the stories that we tell to add a genuine component to this lifestyle of getting out.

And we've found that has proven to be successful with the companies that work with us in essentially, selling the idea that there's a lifestyle behind the products that they sell, and not focusing so much on the products themselves, but having the products compliment the adventure and being used in the adventure as part of the storytelling. And that really has proven to be extremely valuable, particularly for companies that are entering the overland and vehicles realm from the outdoor side, but also for companies that were already in the vehicle realm to begin with, that are trying to re-identify themselves to this broader segment of people that are crossing over from outdoors into vehicle and from vehicle into outdoors.

Kristin: I think you're hitting on something here. The media does shape consumer perception, we can't deny that. And when you look at a Patagonia catalog, just to bring that example up again, or if you look at Outside Magazine for example, the products are depicted a little bit differently. I'm not saying than your publication, but than other publications in vehicle-based adventure. I don't want to name names, but sometimes you can open a magazine, start reading it, and the advertising doesn't fit. It might be really motor-head oriented, or perhaps you've finished a feature and then you turn the page and there's like two pages of just solid products that are from a distributor that's like, "Buy this here." Like again, motor-head.

And so I feel like your publication, I think really does a great job of melding the two. And I know like Gear Junkie and Outside Magazine are starting to cover this more too, because they know people are searching for it. So I think that again, this is really an interesting conversation that we're having. You have to really, I think, it would be a worthwhile experience to dive in and look at some of the media around this, and see

where your brand could fit. It always goes back to serving your specific target consumer. It doesn't matter if Frank has a demographic on his publication or Outside has one on theirs, you have to actually stay completely true and disciplined to your target consumer, and choose the depiction of your brand from there because that's the North star.

But one thing I do love about what you do from a mission standpoint is your... I mean, I hesitate to use the word inclusivity because for so many listening to this podcast, it's been given a heightened meaning, but really what I mean by that is, just the open door to the outdoors for everybody. Can you talk about what that means to you from OutdoorX4, because I think this is at the heart of the opportunity for bridging these two communities together?

Frank: Absolutely. You can go to our Instagram page, for instance, and just read our description there of what OutdoorX4 is on Instagram or our social channels. And it's essentially a gateway to the world outside. To just stepping outside your front door and experiencing the natural world. And really quite honestly, I mean, at the end of the day, that's what the companies that are in the outdoors market want to achieve, is getting people out using their products. That's what companies in the vehicle realm want people to do, is get out and use their products.

It's all part of an experience. It's all part of a lifestyle. It's all part of the... Like I said, going back to this idea of stepping away from the daily grind, looking at your window while you're sitting in an office wishing that you were out somewhere outside, and getting out there and actually doing it. And that's what makes I think outdoor life unique, and its position is that we've always felt like there's an opportunity to really resonate with people and engage with people by telling stories that motivates them to get out whether it's just getting out in their vehicle and doing an overland style trip, like we talked, or just loading up your vehicle, everything that you need and being completely self sufficient for a week or a month or however long.

But also showcasing stories and telling the experiences of people who just like you and me or any other regular enthusiast, just getting out and enjoying a weekend, driving to a trailhead and going backpacking, going hiking, doing paddling. These are the types of things that I think really resonate with people. And again, tying that all into the branding component. You can showcase a product in an ad, in a magazine or you can showcase a product in an ad on social media or at an event. But it's another thing if you're tying that product to an activity or a myriad of activities that make it relevant to a broad demographic and it's done so in a way that compliments the opportunity to get out and enjoy the natural world.

And that's what we specialize in OutdoorX4 is again, reiterating this idea of telling stories that are genuine, that show people with the experiences of getting outside and integrating those products into those experiences.

Kristin: That's awesome. And I love that you do that. I love that you've broaden the portal, as I like to say on the show here. We've heard for years and years, obviously, like Justin, one of our communities of focus being bike, sometimes it can be intimidating to go into a bike shop. We never want that to be the case. We want to get as many people outdoors



as possible, and that's obviously the entire movement of the Outdoor Recreation Economy.

So it's awesome that you're doing that and addressing it from a different angle. And again, what I love about your publication it really depicts like, "See this is really possible for your brand. You do fit here." And again, I think if you guys know that your consumer is interested in this, you need to be there because they're going to expect you to be there, and I think that the majority, if not all of the companies, in active outdoor lifestyle have that, their consumer is really interested in that.

Let's continue on here because I want to make sure we maximize the amount of time that we have together. I wanted to talk, there's a couple of other episodes I've done in this space that I'll put links to. One was with Main Line Overland, which is overland. I think Builder Dealer is the way that they're called by some of the companies in that space. But they do a great job with content and I almost feel like they're like a builder dealer that's an influencer too. And I feel like that we really would be doing a disservice to the audience if we didn't talk about the importance of micro ambassadors or micro influencers and influencers in this space. And obviously, we can get into your news around that too, but let's start by talking about the DIY communities that form and how they form, where they form, what they form around and what a key avenue that is to connect consumers to brands into the consumer decision journey.

Frank:

Well, there's no doubt that the DIY angle is certainly an important part of drawing a brand at a very personal level to enthusiast. It's been my experience that, and I'm sure a lot of your listeners have seen this too, there've been this growth over the years. This hasn't been a recent phenomenon, but really for the last maybe 15 or so years of online communities where like-minded individuals regarding outdoors and vehicle travel, they come together and they share ideas and they share recommendations and suggestions on places to go and things to see and do and how to outfit their vehicles for a specific task.

And as social media has continued to proliferate over the last 8-10 years, there are subsets of groups through social media that also discuss these very subjects of how do you properly outfit a vehicle. And that created an emergence of online influencers and social media influencers, which is a whole completely different discussion, and probably one that I know you've had probably with a number of your clients as well. And that's where there's the value of having some quality influencers on the DIY component. It can help expand a brand placement within a certain target audience.

One of our readers with OutdoorX4, and there are a number of people like this within the overland and vehicle realm, they may or may not have the discretionary income to go out and buy a \$100,000 truck or a completely outfitted vehicle that costs the amount of a house. There's a small market segment that really I think maybe unfairly has maybe influenced what people's perception is of Overland and vehicle-based travel and it's not necessarily that at all.

There is a huge demographic of people in the vehicle realm, that are kind of DIYs, that are looking to get out and enjoy a trip somewhere. And they prefer building out their vehicle as efficiently and as cost effectively as possible. And part of that planning of building out their vehicle includes the products that they're going to be using on a



specific trip and sharing ideas of the things that they need or that they're going to use with other individuals that are within that realm.

Kristin: That's part of the stoke for sure.

Frank: Absolutely. Absolutely. That's just enthusiasm. It's just like that on the outdoor side as it is on the vehicle side, you have enthusiasts that are focused specifically on how to lighten their pack with the lightest gear for an upcoming backpacking trip or minimizing their impact on the environments that they go to and getting suggestions from other like-minded individuals for-

Kristin: I hear you, I totally hear you on that, but the way that I've seen your community's segmented under like Toyota and Dodge, you know what I mean? Like that feels pretty different to me.

Frank: Well, yeah, that's an interesting thing as well. There's no doubt that you have enthusiasts of specific brands just like you have enthusiastic of specific brands on the outdoors front, there are people that are crazy about their Toyotas, there are people that are just absolutely crazy about their Jeeps and they won't drive anything but a Jeep. We have people who just love Land Rovers, and Land Rovers in my realm are notoriously known as being problematic from a maintenance perspective, but there's this essence of coolness that comes from those vehicles.

So there are segments within the vehicle realm of enthusiasts that are passionate about specific vehicle platforms. They're passionate about specific products either for their vehicles or for the outdoors experience. And I think that crosses over very much in a permeates. Well, in many ways with the broader outdoor segment.

Kristin: Let's talk about, your marketing director because I think this is really, really interesting. Share your news on that and then let's also share your news on your forthcoming Gear Issue that you have coming out.

Frank: It's really exciting. Our marketing director's a gentleman named Jason Sakurai. He was one of the folks that helped coordinate this overland experience at the SEMA Show that I mentioned earlier in the show. He was actually awarded from SEMA and the subgroup of SEMA, TORA, Truck & Off-Road Alliance their Influencer of the Year, which is tremendous honor when you really think about the size and scope of SEMA's reach. And then of course the growing scope of the overland realm within the vehicle market, to have our marketing director named Influencer of the Year by such a large organization is truly exciting.

Kristin: Did they cite why he won that award? What was he doing that was so magnificent? Because obviously, he must've enacting on your behalf if he's your marketing director.

Frank: Sure, sure. Jason has been with our team. I actually hired Jason earlier this year, so he's relatively new to OutdoorX4, but he has been in the vehicle market for, oh gosh, 25, 30 years. He's been very well entrenched in this market segment that we're in, and he's had years and years of experience and he knows a lot of companies within this market segment. He's had a lot of personal experiences over the years as well that have really helped to establish him and what he does on his side besides the OutdoorX4.

Just telling very briefly about Jason, he owns a marketing company named, Roadhouse Marketing, that specializes in helping companies integrate with brands in the vehicle segment. So he's a perfect fit for OutdoorX4 because that's our core desire is integrating brands into the vehicle segment on the adventure front. And his company, Roadhouse Marketing has been specializing in that for years and years.

And I think I'm gathering without having spoken to the folks at TORA this yet, but I think a lot of their decision in selecting him as an Influencer of the Year for their organization is attributable to the fact that he's been in the middle of this on the vehicle front for a very, very long time. And with that, he's established quite a reputation, a positive reputation.

Kristin: Big following, I'm sure.

Frank: Yeah.

Kristin: That's awesome. And then tell us about your OutdoorX4 Gear Issue, the annual Gear Issue. And the reason I wanted to bring this up isn't like a shameless plug, everybody, this is because I feel like this is a great guide for you to actually see, and this is digital, it will be printed at the end of 2019 so it's digital I think pretty sooner right now. But the reason I'm saying go check this out is because you can actually see... We're familiar with Gear, with the backdrop of OutdoorX4 brand new issue. And it's free, which we love. It's my favorite color here on the Channel Mastery Podcast.

Frank: Yeah. What do you think around the free? We released our first Gear Issue back in 2017 and that was really driven by our readers' interest and feedback. Our focus with the Gear Issue has been very much like with OutdoorX4 is all about. It's kind of a hybrid of sharing products that we have been using on staff during the course of the year, which we published the magazine six times per year, print and digital. The product that we feature in the Gear guide are products that we've been using, that members of our staff have been using in the field for at least a year, and in many cases, products that we've been using for years.

And it highlights those products in a format that's fun and engaging. It's also done in a way where we've blended certain products throughout the Gear Issue with what most people might perceive as maybe being disorganized in a sense, but that's not what it's intended to do. It's really intended to meld the vehicle component with the outdoors components. You can go through our Gear Issue and you'll see a really nicely written review about a camp kitchen and that'll be right next to a review about a new set of tires for your vehicle-based adventure.

So it's got a nice mix of products, outdoors, vehicle related, and we're going to have our third Gear Issue coming out shortly before Thanksgiving. We'll excited about it.

Kristin: Yeah. Awesome. I'll put the link in there. One thing I realized, Frank, before we wrap up here is, we didn't really spend adequate time talking about the product distribution angle. I did talk about Main Line a little bit. We'll put links to that podcast and that website and that community in the podcast notes as well, but can you talk a little bit

about how are consumers actually purchasing it? Is it moving more to online or are they still going to these builder dealers? What's your take on that?

Frank: It seems to be a combination of the two. There's no doubt that online has made it so much easier for consumers to find the products that they want, to do so quickly and conveniently. But there are still a number of folks out there who find going to a brick and mortar store as their main preference. And there are a number of retailers that offer a really nice myriad of products that are starting to capture more of the outdoors component to the vehicle products that they sell. Main Line's an excellent example. They're based on the East Coast and they are in the Mid Atlantic, I'm sorry.

Kristin: You sounded almost like a Upper Middle East, remember that? That's another, we were actually trading movie lines in our rehearsal calls. So forgive us everybody, I'm sitting here laughing. But yes, the Eastern Seaboard is what you meant to say. I think it's Boston.

Frank: Eastern Seaboard is exactly what I meant to say.

Kristin: Yeah. I think they have a Boston location, if I'm not mistaken.

Frank: Yeah, they do. They do have one up in Massachusetts as well. And so they're starting to expand their presence from the East Coast. And Main Line for those of you all who aren't familiar with Main Line, and Kristin mentioned you will include a link to the interview with Matt Henwood that he did about a year and a half or two ago, I think. But they are one of the preeminent retailers of overland vehicle-based adventure products for the vehicle. And are also starting to expand to include more of the outdoors lifestyle stuff as well. And there are companies, there are retailers that are emerging throughout the country that are offering the same thing. There's a company in New Jersey named OK4WD who has made... A primary goal of theirs is to really focus on the lifestyle component. And a lot of the vehicle builds that they do take into consideration the idea of adventure travel and integrating a strong outdoors component to that with storage system designed in the vehicle to keep your hiking gear or rock climbing gear, your paddling stuff organized, and done so in a really strategically done way.

There's AT Overland in Arizona who has been in business for gosh, almost 20 years, I think, between 15 and 20 years. They have been doing the same thing. There's Mule Expedition Outfitters in the Pacific Northwest too is another preeminent company who's crossover very nicely between the vehicle and the outdoor segment. So there are a number of retail outlets that are continuing to grow and expand and recognizing the value of outdoors on the vehicle front. And I think with that, there's a lot of opportunity there for outdoors companies to get actively engaged through that medium as well.

Kristin: I totally agree. And then let's not forget, we have to hit on the hybrid electric facet of the evolution of vehicle-based adventure. Obviously, we have Rivian, Tesla, CAKE Motorcycles, Boehringer. Let's talk about that. Let's talk about that segment.

Frank: That's a really exciting segment that for me. I'm really, really looking forward to seeing

where it goes. And we, ironically, we have a story planned for our Gear Issue that highlights electric overlanding and the huge potential that there could be with electric vehicles as it relates to all the things that we write about and all the things that a number of the companies that you work with are really interested in getting involved in as well. Electric vehicles, the biggest issue on that front has always been just infrastructure, having the proper infrastructure and vehicle battery life.

And that is starting to really... Well, I'd say starting it over the last couple of years has really taken off. And for us on the vehicle front, it's exciting because for so long, one of the biggest, I would say maybe constraints in getting more companies actively involved with outdoors is the vehicle footprint and electric vehicles could really, really make a big difference in terms of footprint and the impact environmentally that vehicles have when traveling to remote destinations.

And a key component that isn't often times brought up within the overland in vehicle-based realm is the importance of treading lightly and staying the trail and leaving no trace, which are all very important principles that we really, really pushed education-wise through our channels, and electric overlanding adds to that. Electric vehicles by reducing footprint offers a tremendous opportunity to really impact positively, at least we're expecting it to positively impact how we are accessing these areas. And a number of companies are really stepping up and filling that niche. And Rivian is one that we're really excited about.

That company has shown over the last two years a strong desire to really have a positive impact on getting people to a trail head and getting them into remote, remote areas and doing so in a way that's fun, and the vehicle platform that looks really, really cool but also has very low impact. And they were ironically at the Overland Expo event earlier this year in Arizona, and they definitely are one of several companies that you mentioned that are actively pursuing this lifestyle of getting outdoors and doing so in a responsible manner. And I'm super excited about that.

Kristin:  
think

I am as well. Is there anything that I might have missed today in our conversation? I

this was excellent whether it's an introduction or just kind of a permission granted or something like, "Go after this." Everybody, this is already there, you need to approach it in the right way and make sure that it's in line with the end-consumer target, but it seems like a vibrant, fast growing industry. And what I love about it most is there are big reputable brands in this space and coming into this space that are consumer in the more "core outdoor" or outdoor active lifestyle would be remiss to not somehow gain exposure right alongside of them.

There's a lot of opportunity here as we head into 2020 and I think the door is open and it's welcome for brands on our side.

Frank:

Absolutely. At the end of the day, circling back to how we started. Virtually, anybody who's doing anything outdoors is using some vehicle to get to a trail head, to do all these different things. And the infrastructure in terms of reaching that audience has been in place for quite a while, and OutdoorX4 is just one of many components of that. I definitely feel like there is a lot of opportunity for outdoors companies to actively

immerse themselves on the vehicle front and anything that I can do to help guide them along that way through our channels and through the channels of our peers and working collaboratively and collectively to, at the end of the day, get people outside and doing so responsibly, I'm absolutely for that. And I think that there's a lot of benefit there that companies can absolutely garner long term.

Kristin: Me too. And I appreciate you coming on the show today to talk to us more about how to do that in the most genuine way we can. So thank you so much, Frank, for all that you've shared here today, and I look forward to following all of your success with OutdoorX4. And I know that you will be at future outdoor retailer shows as well as available to anyone in our industry at these other shows that might be new to them. Where can they find you online?

Frank: Absolutely. You can visit us online at [www.OutdoorX4.com](http://www.OutdoorX4.com), pronounced Outdoor-by-4. And you can find us socially through Instagram, through Facebook, Twitter, Tumbler, YouTube. Our handle is @OutdoorX4. Email us from our website, [Inquiry@OutdoorX4.com](mailto:Inquiry@OutdoorX4.com) or contact Kristin and I'm sure she can put you in contact with me.

Kristin: I definitely can because I'm a connector. Thank you so much. I really appreciate your time today and I hope everybody listening today is as stoked as I am to get out there and get after it, whether I'm in my car or moving myself around on a bike or my own feet, whatever it is, I just can't wait. I mean, here we are at the beginning of winter. I already am dreaming about spring and summer.

Frank: Absolutely.

Kristin: I'm very excited to see your new Gear Issue, and thanks so much for joining us here today.

Frank: Oh, thanks, Kristen. It's been a true pleasure.