Archispeak 339 - AU - Outdoor Design Innovation with Struxure and Bromic Heating

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**Evan Troxel:** In this episode, we welcome Scott Selzer, CEO of Struxure and Scott Smith, the CEO of Bromic Heating. And they're joining us today to discuss the evolution, current state and innovation of building products, specifically outdoor heaters and pergolas. These products, which I would think that we would all agree here that are appreciated for their design and details by architects, are used in both residential and commercial projects, which we've been talking about in this series leading up to today's conversation. So welcome to Archispeak Scott and Scott.

Great to have you.

**Scott Smith:** pleasure to be here equally. Thank you both. Welcome Scott S.

I'll call it Scott Big S and I'll be Scott Little S.

**Evan Troxel:** all right. Well, don't expect us to get this right. I mean, we've already talked about this. This is going to be difficult as it is. You both are Scotts. You both, last names both start with S, so we will do our best to, [00:01:00] uh, just talk about Bromic Scott and Struxure Scott, something

**Scott Smith:** that

might be better than Big and Little, I think, yeah.

**Evan Troxel:** So as I mentioned in the intro, uh, each of you are the CEO of a building product company. And so I would love it if, and maybe let's, Struxures, Scott, let's talk with you first, give us an overview of your background and of your company and let's jump into it.

**Scott Selzer:** sure. Like you said, we're a building products company. My story is a little unique. I actually started as a teacher. from teaching, you have that whole summer. So it was like, Hey, summertime, what are you gonna do? Well, I was always handy. So I I, I pulled a couple other handy teachers together and we, uh, started a company called Schools Out Construction.

So when school was out, we were doing the construction and, uh, we quickly grew that, uh, to where, you know, within the next couple summers we were, we were making more in the summertime than we were all year teaching. So. In 2008, had this great idea to go in full time with it, did not see what was going to happen at the end of the

**Cormac Phalen:** [00:02:00] Oh, I know that one well. Right.

**Scott Selzer:** had a client that had, um, some water issues going on. So I, I gave him all these different scenarios of, um, different patio covers and roofs and, and pergolas and all kinds of stuff. And he's like. He was like, no, no, Scott, is there something that can open and close like this? To let the sunlight in because it's a really wooded area and my wife really that's where she goes out the sun But we needed the rain protection as well. Is there something like that? And I said, well, I don't know but i'll go and google it So just like everybody else I I went I I found I found a like product actually coming out of australia about 45 years ago now. Um, and so saw an opportunity where there was a couple companies that were trying to import it into the US but weren't, weren't very successful with it. So I saw a great opportunity to take that and, and we, um, we, we made our own and, and since the patents had run out in Australia, we were able to [00:03:00] get it fully patented here in the us. Um, and, and from there we started to build a dealer network throughout North America. And, and, uh, quickly grew that, you know, and we're about, oh, we're in our 13th year, I guess, as a manufacturing company. And, um, uh, two and a half years ago we sold to the AZEK, um, building company, uh, which is a, um, publicly traded. Uh, building products company. They have a bunch of different brands. Struxure is 1 of them. Timber Tech is another big brand of theirs, and they have a couple other, um, very large brands that, that kind of go under that portfolio. So, um, we've just been. Uh, our thing is growth. That's what it's always been about with us where it's, it's these really cool pergolas and cabanas that open and close with louvers. The, the really cool thing about it is that it's a frame in the backyard, right? So. Like designers come into the house and it's really easy because everything's already set up for you. Here's the kitchen. Here's the living room. You go outside. You don't have a kitchen and living room, right? Maybe you have a kitchen, but oh, I [00:04:00] need something over it.

That's where we come in but by putting a Like our name Struxure right spelled with an x a little bit different by putting a Struxure in your backyard You're, you're, you are making a place to now put all these other products on it. Heaters is one example with, with, uh, Bromixcat, right? So, so that, that's, that's the exciting thing about it is, um, we've kind of set it up and now it's kind of evolving, right?

The product, we have a new product development team that, that's all they do is come up with new, new ideas and new products. to enhance it. One of our biggest products that we're looking at right now is called Struxure Plus that we're going to be releasing later this year, hopefully by the middle of the end of summer.

And it's actually connecting all those things that I was just talking about. So, uh, what you have today is a beautiful Pergola, uh, our Pergola X product, right? For instance, and it has heaters on it, has screens on it, has lights, fans, all these things. And then you go and look in the [00:05:00] drawer. You know, underneath it or wherever they put all the remotes and you have 15 remotes. And so at Struxure, we're like, I think we can do better. Let's come up with a control and demand system that connects all these devices together. So we're excited about that. Bromic's one of our partners and we're excited about heat. Um, obviously that, you know, When you live in different climates where you can get more year round, um, fun and enjoyment out of your pergola, um, People, I, I always say everybody that we're in the comfort business, and I know Scott, Bromic Scott is as well, And so people are only going to stay outside until they're, are uncomfortable.

So if you, we can keep them comfortable, they're going to stay outside longer.

**Cormac Phalen:** So let me ask one real quick question before we go on to Bromic Scott. As a husband of a teacher, do you miss teaching?

**Scott Selzer:** Um, I miss, I miss the, I miss the kids,

**Cormac Phalen:** Oh, I know. I just, I kind of assumed the answer. I was just, I was curious because, I know teaching well.

**Scott Selzer:** [00:06:00] yeah, but it's funny because, I mean, it's just, I'm just teaching,

**Cormac Phalen:** yeah, absolutely.

**Scott Selzer:** I mean, being a CEO, you just, you have a classroom, right? It's, it's all your

**Cormac Phalen:** It's, it's amazing how quickly that translates to the built environment and working with contractors, working with architects, working with manufacturers like Bromic, you know, to kind of integrate things and realize that, wait, all of my cat herding as a teacher works just as well

as in the construction industry.

**Evan Troxel:** bit of a background of you and your company.

**Scott Smith:** made it hard. It's a hard act to follow. I mean, I'm going to have to really play on the Australian accent now to make it good.

So, Bromic Group, it's a group company out of Australia. It's a privately run business, um, myself and two other partners. The business has been around for 40 plus years. Now, we got into heat.

It seems to be that 2008 was a, was a fortuitous time. That's really when we launched Bromic Heating. Um, we'd played around in the outdoor space [00:07:00] prior to that. Um, with respect to heat, not necessarily in a manufacturing position, but distribution. And we were one of the propagators, at least in the Australian market only, and I'm not necessarily proud of this today, but one of the propagators of those dreaded mushroom heaters, the propane heaters with the top hats, um, because it was the only product available.

Yeah. the Australian marketplace was at the time, probably similar to Southern California, and we both know that that's a 365 day year outdoor, um, cultural based environment where people love outdoor dining all year round and can enjoy it all year round. Sydney, very much so was that and that's where we're head office.

Um, we had played with this mushroom heater, Australia was one of the leaders in, it, had always been an outdoor culture and was one of the leaders of anti-smoking regulations, which pushed people. to the outdoors if they wanted to smoke. And much of the population did, or more of the population back at those times, but it also pushed people generally more into the outdoor space with a want to enjoy it more year [00:08:00] round, uh, all year round. Our reference to that was, and we started life in the commercial space, was there has to be a better way, these products are not a great product, they're inefficient, and my background is as an engineer, in looking at it and looking at it with, uh, my partner Mark, it was, there has to be a better way to do this, um, these products are, again, not efficient, they can be dangerous, Workplace health and safety is a problem.

You're always refilling gas bottles. It's not great in areas if you want a bit of alcohol, et cetera. And that's where Bromokeeting was really born. And now when we did it, Australia, we love our home market, but we are restricted in the number of people that we have in that country. And we knew that if we were doing it, it was probably a place to go overseas as well.

And North America was always something that was. very close to us in terms of our desire and our understanding and Southern California was somewhere we wanted to be. And that started our journey. So we started in 2008. Um, we ventured into here in 2010 and our journeys just traveled on from there. [00:09:00] And we've witnessed a lot of change.

Um, it really, it's been fortuitous for us. Um, But, as Scott said, that transition to the outdoor space, and more specifically, we consider ourselves as well, in linking very much with, with the likes of Struxure, to be propagators of outdoor comfort. I mean, at the end of the day, people's desires otherwise were, I go outside until it gets cold, I put a blanket over me, and if it's still cold, I go back indoors. Which is really not, it removes that comfort aspect, it removes the entertainment enjoyment that people get from being in the outdoors. And our desire has always been to see people happy, whether that be in a commercial or residential point, allow families, allow colleagues, whoever else it would be, to enjoy the space in the outdoors because it offers so much.

So it's then how to do it, how to do it efficiently, in a really well designed format. And that's our desire. So that's where it started from, and then from there, it's now a business for us. It's now a largest business between [00:10:00] the three group businesses. Um, North America is certainly a large market for us.

We operate then in about 24 countries around the world. So we operate through North America, through Canada, through Europe, Europe in the continent, obviously through Australia, and then smaller markets. for us at this stage, at least anywhere through Japan, India, and then a number of distributors beyond that. Um, that's not to say that we're magnificent, it does talk a lot about what is happening globally in a, in an outdoor space. Um, in terms of what people desire, both professionally and at home. So, it's a, it's a really fun place to be.

**Evan Troxel:** You've already alluded to kind of this evolution that you've seen in heaters between what you're offering now back to the mushroom, but the heaters with the hat, as you called it. And I would assume similarly for there's been an. evolution over time and you have this really beautifully designed product and there's a lot of engineering in that I'm sure to make [00:11:00] these elements that you both supply to look as simple as they look.

I mean, there's, there's a lot going on beneath the surface there. Can you guys both talk about the, the evolution of the outdoor market, not just your products, but this whole series has, has just shown the complete. flop that we've seen in expectation of users and, and wanting and desiring outdoor space, comfortable outdoor space, designed outdoor space. And I'm curious when you guys started these companies, like what was it like then? And how have you watched it evolve over time?

**Scott Selzer:** I think. I mean, if you look at it, kind of getting back to your point, I mean, pergolas have been around for thousands and thousands of years. It goes back to ancient times, right? I mean, fires 1 is also 1 of those things, right? It's just, I think if you kind of compare, you know, what. Caesar was sitting under in a pergola to a pergola that a pergola that you'd be standing or sitting underneath today with Struxure is [00:12:00] technology, right? It's kind of like Henry Ford to a Tesla that's still had four wheels, four wheels, but a lot of, a lot of technology has gone into the cars today. Um, and so that's, I, that's how I always kind of look at it.

Um, when, when you're really talking about the evolution of, of a product like a Pergola.

**Evan Troxel:** and productizing. A thing like a pergola is really interesting, right? Because I mean, you can, like, it's a kit, I assume, and that you manufacture all these parts, they get shipped to a site that gets assembled on site, but it is, it's, it's like the Ikea version. I I'll just put it that simply, right?

Where it's like, it's, it's probably flat packed. It shows up, the contractor puts it together. I'm sure there's a lot going on inside those legs and inside those beams, but, um. I mean, that's really interesting to kind of productize space, right? This is, this is an interesting topic as an architect.

When, when you're talking about creating a structure that surrounds an element that sits outside, it could be a [00:13:00] kitchen, it could be a living room, it could be, you know, some type of outdoor space. I, that's an interesting thing to me to productize something so large. And then you have to be concerned about all the logistics and, and things like that.

with the demand increase that we've seen And just in the last four years alone, I can assume that, that you've had some interesting challenges there.

**Scott Selzer:** Sure, I mean, supply chain, you know, employees, I mean, all those types of things is, is, yeah, when you have a growth company, like both of our companies, it's, it's staying in front of it, making sure you have really good people. Um, and, and. And, and really just being on top of it. I mean, in the buildings products, it's, it's up and down all around, but, uh, you know, yes, you're right.

It's really exploded. I mean, the, the, the pre COVID to the post COVID, um, world of, hey, I want to go outside and I want to enjoy my space. Um, it has definitely taken it to the next level when you're talking about just outdoor space. I think what we really [00:14:00] want to do is make a special place. So, it's just not a space, but it's a place. That Struxure is where I'm going to go. I'm going to hang out. It's my new man cave, right? Um, I mean, and that only happens when you start to put other products on

it. I talked about the 1st thing that somebody puts on a Struxure is lights. The 2nd is a fan and the 3rd. It's probably either a heater, depending on where they're at or sound, um,

or, or motorized screens on the side. So, that's what we're seeing.

**Cormac Phalen:** You kind of alluded to the pre COVID, post COVID, and, you know, we've talked a lot in, previous episodes about the shift in, as Evan alluded to earlier, this desire to have exterior space be a designed space. And, you know, it is an expectation for both residential and commercial for you to have a exterior space.

And I'm just wondering, um, and this is for both, but, Struxure Scott, since you were talking about, [00:15:00] um, some of your spaces, I'm wondering how the trend towards outdoor living has, has changed since, the COVID era. And, do you see. That maintaining, do you see it kind of like, pitching up down, how do you see the market

**Scott Selzer:** I see it that, you know, the people that want to go out and enjoy their backyard, they're going to do that. People that restaurants or, uh, different hospitality environments that want to, you know, make more revenue in their space, they're going to do the outdoor space. I mean, you're starting to see that even in the commercial

setting. I mean, designers and architects, you know, are yes, used to always be focused on the inside and the room. Yeah. The rooms are important, but now I'm going to resort. I want to know, what does the pool look like? What, what are these cabanas? What's going on, you know, with all that type stuff. And then I want to be comfortable when I'm outside, because I

want, if you're going on vacation, just think about it.

You don't want to go and stay inside somewhere. You want to be outside. That's just a natural human psychology.

**Cormac Phalen:** Well, what's interesting is, [00:16:00] you know, Evan and I both come from a background of, educational architecture, higher education and things like that, and where we even see the desire and the demand for, higher level of outdoor spaces, higher level of amenities, like outdoor heating and stuff within those spaces, because let's just say we're doing a dorm and, you have, you know, X amount of opportunities for X amount of different dorms. And, you know, as somebody who's got a kid in college right now, he went and chose the nicest dorm. He went and chose the one that had all the amenities available to it rather than just your typical kind of quad.

And, and it's interesting to see how that evolution has become a demand more than just a, you know, nice to have.

**Evan Troxel:** Well, Scott Smith, let's talk about the evolution of outdoor heaters. So you, you mentioned the, like I said a minute ago, the, the mushroom heaters and, but now like we're talking about integrated. elements into other things where they're hidden away. Uh, all, uh, you know, [00:17:00] they're concealed hardware, concealed piping to get, you know, whether it's electrical or gas or whatever to talk about what, what has happened innovation and technology wise with the evolution of outdoor heaters,

**Scott Smith:** mean, touching on what you were talking about just before. Um, I think the core reference here is it's all driven by the end user, whether they're in a residential setting or a commercial setting. And both, uh, the Struxure business and the Bromic business, I think, are driven around one thing is trying to solve problems to make the customer's life better.

Now, we do that through the architectural community. So our reference then is to try and solve problems to make, Let's say your life's easier, an architect's life's easier in the way that you integrate a design to make it more usable for an end user. Everything that when, that then we do, and I think that, that Scott does, uh, with, with Struxure is then all about how that is integrated, how you get, What I will reference it in, in our ethos around product, which is design, performance, and efficiency to produce an outcome for you, where the user is [00:18:00] going to enjoy it more on a side note that Cormac mentioned there, we just had that very conversation today and you're driven, I think, or an architect is driven, excuse me for, for, for this reference, uh, around, um, the changing nature of the way we live in the, in the built environment, the more condensed way that we live in the need for people to have more breakout space and more shared space. We do live in a, a more condensed environment, a more challenging environment. People are more on top of each other and costs are a real issue, which are bringing us closer together in the way that we live. So every ounce of space becomes important and it pushes us to those outdoor positions. And it means the creation of those amenities. Our marketing coordinator, one of today, we were talking about multi-res and the application of the outdoor space in it and the need for amenity and his reference was very much your son's reference, Cormac, and that is, I will choose a position with amenities over one, over another, even if the cost is higher, because I'm going to live in this, live in this space and I

need it for my health and [00:19:00] well being.

So the challenge that you have to design for that, , and our challenge then is to deliver to you something that offers that design that performs an efficiency to give people that usage of space. Now, that becomes quite different to ours. Ours, we engage in heat, heat by definition, materials around it is always a challenge.

They have historically been potentially functional product, but quite ugly product and quite large. Um, so ours is always to maintain an efficiency. In the product that we present to market whilst being able to shrink the platform and integrate, um, because our reference to this is in everything that we do on, on, uh, with heat is that it should provide the comfort to an area in a seamless manner without being an objectionable circumstance in it. It should blend into the environment and create and allow. your design or an architect's design to take over for the user and just create an environment that they want to stay in. Because [00:20:00] that's where the comfort comes from being warm or cool or shaded in an environment that then comes from, from Scott's product coupled with ours or other, or other products in a, an aesthetic area that you've designed to, to meet the, the needs of the consumer. So I think it's been forced by the user, It's then forced that onto you, it's forced that onto us, and if we don't keep up, then we don't have a place, really, and our job is to do that. It creates a really great challenge, one that I love.

**Cormac Phalen:** What I kind of find very interesting is, we're forced by the consumer that then forces you, then forces us. And what's interesting about the responses that both of your companies have done is take in aesthetics as a part of that, which, you know, then obviously appeals to us, because, you know, We would go to you first for a lot of these different solutions because we can get the aesthetic solution as much as the functional solution, as much as the transformational spaces and things like that.

We're able [00:21:00] to, also use, it's just like, point out, it's like, okay, you could have the mushroom top, or you could have, like, say, and I'll, I'll, pitch your product for you right now, the Eclipse, and things like that. And how those are integrated into, say, the Struxures elements. And, it provides us a, an easier selling point when we're trying to sell these types of spaces to our clients, when we can come up with not only a functional space, but also an aesthetic space.

**Scott Smith:** Yeah, agreed.

**Evan Troxel:** Yeah, I, I would also add to that the, the whole idea of, I mean, heat is one of those things where like the analogy that I keep thinking of as you're, as you were talking about, about it was, you know, being invisible is like the music at Disneyland. You don't know where it's coming from, but it makes you feel like you're at Disneyland when you're walking. through the aisles and it and it blends from even different from one music to another when I go from one land to another and and I just feel a certain way [00:22:00] as a as a visitor as a guest at Disneyland and I don't necessarily know why I feel like that I kind of feel like outdoor space comfort is kind of like that in some ways where it's not obvious what is making us comfortable or uncomfortable, but thoughtful design.

And when that can be implemented in outdoor space, just makes it feel good for a broader range of people for a longer period of time. And they don't even necessarily know why I think that's a really successful bringing together all these different elements of action of

design. So we're talking about.

The, the Struxure device and, and the, the louvers and being able to open and close those and respond to the sun as, as an example, or the wind as an example, and then these heaters come on and like all of this stuff and thinking about technology and automation and the way that you can start to combine these into a really interesting recipe and these things are just happening. Without my direct intervention to make those things happen, it's a really [00:23:00] interesting evolution that we're seeing happen and it's playing out extremely well in outdoor

space design. I mean, it's happening indoors too, right? I mean, we have louvers and light sensors and all these different things and, and the buildings are becoming way smarter so that we don't have to intervene manually as much, but that's definitely extended to the outdoors.

And

I think it's, it's pretty fascinating. And as an architect. Not knowing that that stuff is happening is to my detriment.

So having information available, like podcasts like this, for example, just to understand that these things even exist and that these options are out there is huge because then when the time is right, like I, I know where to look, I know where to find the, the answers for that kind of thing. Are, are you guys seeing something similar with, with your, your clients is kind of a loaded, I know your clients are the building industry, uh, design professionals and installers, contractors, but, but the actual users of the space, are you getting feedback from them that's kind [00:24:00] of reinforcing all that?

Because I mean, going back to the users who are really driving this is, are you hearing similar ideas from them?

**Scott Selzer:** Yeah, like I was saying before, I mean, 1 of the things where every product comes with remote control, right? RF frequency has been around forever, right?

It's old technology. Why are we doing that? Um, so that's that's prompted Struxure to come out with a Struxure plus product, which is a new. We're using control and demand systems, that's using Matter and thread, right?

Which is the next protocol really coming in the future for us over the next 5 to 10 years. Um, you're going to see that huge with the internet of things are We are a thing, right? Our Struxure is a

thing. Um, so we need to connect, um, like you were talking about. So just as important as what's the evolution is going on inside.

That's also happening outside. And what I kind of, you kind of alluded, like everything's kind of playing together. Good. I see Struxure plus as an orchestra and, you know, the user is the conductor, right? So You're able to use it and put it into different [00:25:00] scenes. We're using the word scenes because, but it's more of that.

It's more of an experience because in our product, we can have the lights, the fans going, different things, louvers, open control, turn on heaters, screens can come down. There's all kinds of different things that you can do to make it really unique space for you out there. And, um, and to really show it off to your neighbor as well.

So I think when we're thinking about end users, yes, the, the, the, I always look at the, the backyard, but our product is also heavily commercial as well. And that all goes to, Hey, I want people to be dry. I want them to be comfortable. And that's what we need. So, um, we're, you know, delivering that on both sides of the equation there.

**Scott Smith:** Yeah, I think, I mean, we're all pushed by the user, aren't we? I mean, Scott talks about controls and automation and the implementation of those. That prompts us. His business and mine to both work together in that realm where we're producing controls that link with his to be able to create this environment. And simplicity is a, is [00:26:00] a critical thing. People want absolute control, the ability to dial up, dial down, comfort and heat, sound, lighting, or otherwise. Link that through his system, but have our system integrate. They don't want these multiple points of control. I mean the consumer really is, and I think we've, we've I speak for our business and I'm sure Scott's the same.

Develop feedback loops for that purpose. You have to listen to the client and the client's needs. And look, that's taken us in many different directions where we wouldn't have thought HEAT would be applied. Um, today as an example, and I'm going to steer away from what is the Struxure position for a moment, uh, it's not the biggest segment of our business by any stretch, but it's a unique one and an interesting one.

We do quite, have ended up in an environment just simply through listening to customers, where we put. quite a reasonable quantity of heat positions into the cruise industry. Now, 10 years ago, we never would have thought that cruises, which ultimately are luxury hotels that just sit on water, that would have significant outdoor environments where they would want to keep people warm, but they [00:27:00] do. And when you think about that, it's, it's not them wanting to do it again. It's the consumer wanting to be in that outdoor environment again on a cruise, not locked in a cabin,

sitting out there, enjoying a Mai Tai or a Pina Colada on a deck with their favorite people are in the world, which is why they're on the cruise in the first place, and enjoy a sunset or enjoy a nightly meal. And it's driven changes to that industry dramatically. I mean, we watch vessels get bigger and bigger, but we watch the features that get included on those vessels become, uh, more inclusive and, uh, just more about family, friends, and just enjoyment at large. Scott,

it might be a place for, for Struxure as well these days, I think.

**Scott Selzer:** Well, actually, we've, we've been on, yeah, both yachts and cruise

**Scott Smith:** Yeah, indeed.

**Scott Selzer:** go

**Cormac Phalen:** Interesting.

**Scott Smith:** and look, we both do. We, and that's okay. We both end up on super yachts as well. They're really interesting positions. That's a

unique circumstance. We don't necessarily want to talk about that, but it is amazing about where they do go. Um, and even now, [00:28:00] listening to consumers, you see them in health aspects.

Now, if I go to heat again, um, and just that comfort point, because health care professionals have seen the benefits in either rehabilitation, Um, Aged care or otherwise, a put of giving people access more to an outdoor environment, more to see the sun, more to enjoy

what the outdoors offer, but in order to be able to do it, you have to do it in a comfortable environment.

And that

again can bring shade, heat and or cooling through fans and or shade. Um, so it's really, it is very much consumer driven and it's changing dramatically over time as to how those outdoors are incorporated into that built in environment.

**Cormac Phalen:** It's interesting you say that because, you know, we've noticed a trend more and more with, uh, health care that they're requiring, not even requesting because of the, consumer, I don't know if consumer's the right word. word for healthcare, but for more and more outdoor spaces because they see the health benefits of outdoor spaces and they [00:29:00] see that, there's a greater demand, greater need for, both emotional as well as, emotional comfort.

and so. they're asking for those spaces. I mean, we're, we're finishing up some projects right now in the Baltimore area where we wouldn't have assumed that, in a multi story building, we would have multiple spaces throughout the, the height of this building for outdoor spaces, but, we have them and we are integrating, things like, heat and, shading devices and things like that for them to be able to extend that kind of emotional health care out into the spaces.

**Scott Smith:** agree wholeheartedly. It just

extends, you know, from a physical and both a mental

viewpoint. Um, I mean, we are an aging population in any developed, uh, area. Um,

it, it brings needs

and we all want quality of life and comfort.

**Evan Troxel:** Let's talk about the current state of the building industry and where your products kind of fit into that. What, what are the current kind of accepted states of [00:30:00] outdoor pergolas and outdoor heating versus maybe where you want to see that go? And we've talked a little bit about these innovations and, and what's possible, but I think the current state probably doesn't. match that equally as, as equally as you would like.

**Scott Selzer:** Yeah, what I, I think what both of our companies have done a really good job at is they focused on design. I mean, you started with Scott's story about the mushroom, right? It, you know, heat was ugly, right? And what Bromic has done is they've brought it and they've made it look. You know, nice and sexy. And it's like, I, yeah, I could see that putting that out on my back porch or

deck or wherever.

Um, and we've done the same thing at Struxure. Right? So, I mean, we have spent millions and millions of dollars on new product development, because we want to continue to be cutting edge. Um, when you have a product that moves. Um, that, that creates, you know, a lot of things, a lot of opportunities, I guess, would be the great word for that.

But we are huge on design because, I mean, when you go out and you look at it. And then, and you [00:31:00] look at these pergolas and you're like, well, that's, you know, some European pergola or that's it. And it's like, we want to be unique and different and kind of give what the clients want both. And we have, like you were saying, different audiences, right?

You have, you have high end residential backyards. All the way to, you know, large commercial settings to rooftops like you were just talking about, um, to, to all different types of, um, from corporate campuses to, you know, to, um, healthcare like you were just talking about. So, uh, you know, both of our products spanned all, all through all those different areas, which is, is pretty unique.

**Scott Smith:** Yeah, I think, and look, I'll, I'll speak for Scott and I both here and hope that he agrees. Um, I don't think And look, it probably plays back to his, uh, reference to being a school teacher as well. And maybe me liking a soapbox, but I don't think we really sell a product. At the end of the day, our reference in terms of engagement and market is really about awareness and it becomes in an educational position. [00:32:00] Because people aren't. The outdoor position is evolving constantly. I mean, it wasn't, but I mean, I'm going to say none of us are that old. Um, and as children, none of the products today, referencing around the outdoors, could ever have been thought of and existed. All that existed outside was you sit with a few garden chairs around a fire and that was it.

And then it gets cold and you go inside. Um, awareness around the product availability and around what you can now do in the outdoors with product is that is really the biggest challenge that we've got. I think considering a, uh, a Struxure pergola or considering Bromic heat in the aftermath of design of an outdoor area is a far more difficult circumstance and a far more expensive circumstance. Um, so it's one, you know, that's really the challenge that we're focused at and engage in, um, is. through the, through the design community and then through the customer alike is creating that awareness of what you can do, um, to, and what you can [00:33:00] achieve in the outdoors. Scott, I think you would agree. And that's really where our

where our business drives at.

**Scott Selzer:** Yes.

**Evan Troxel:** Yeah. That early engagement has got to be key, right? To your point about getting these elements into design. It's, it's really, really, really hard to add

them late

in the Yeah. Yeah.

on decisions like these that it makes no sense to try to shoehorn them in at the end. Not just from a dollar standpoint, but from infrastructure and planning and, layouts, everything.

I mean, and so I, I take your point there. I think, I think that that actually goes to a lot of building product manufacturers, right? They should be getting involved a lot earlier. Um, and, and I mean, that's really on, on the design team to engage with them. I know a lot of building product manufacturers are ready and willing to engage, and we don't take you all up on that all the time.

I mean, we have a million things to worry about. You probably understand that as well, right? So there's, there's a balance that a [00:34:00] better balance could definitely be achieved there. But I think the first part of it, to your point, Scott, Bromic Scott, is just knowing what's possible is a

huge benefit. Um, for when the opportunity comes up, I mean, then, then you can go down that road and engage early to, to make a, a better

**Scott Smith:** Yeah. I mean, commonly we'll end up with, with clients, whether they be in design community or the end user say, referencing, at least make facility through power and through, through structural aspects. To facilitate for it later, if budget's an issue or if it's not our product and the design circumstance, we'd far prefer that facilitation is made or, and other product is used to get utilization of a space.

'cause one of the, the, the biggest shortcomings or shortfalls is that you end up with an outdoor space that's not used. Um, particularly considering what it can give to an audience

**Evan Troxel:** Right. I've heard a little bit about innovation and technology. Scott Seltzer, you talked about IoT. So I, I can imagine kind of, you know, setting up using my Alexa or my home app. Oh, it just went off in the [00:35:00] corner. Uh, right. It's, it's like one of those things where, where you, you just, you tell it and, and all of these things are kind of linked together and it, and it kind of transforms space. Are there other innovations that, that you're working on at Struxure that you want to let the audience know about?

**Scott Selzer:** Yeah, so I mean, the Struxure Plus is going to be really, you know, game changing. I, I think for the industry, because again, it was, everybody has a remote and now it's, hey, let's talk to our partners. Let's work with, with, with ProMic heaters to integrate that into that Struxure Plus, we have other partners like, uh, Sonance and Sonos on the sound side of stuff.

Um, we, we've, uh, partnered with Fenetex on the screens. Uh, so those types of things are all going to, um, to where they're just endpoints to the Struxure Plus system, which is kind of cool, and it's all a mesh network. So if you had one, one gateway, one brain, and I have a 2, 000 square foot system that's going all the way down there, you know, a couple, thousand feet or whatever, it can all talk to each other and back to it, which is pretty cool.

[00:36:00] And it makes installation a lot

easier. Right. Um, 'cause all the end points just need to get power and, and so that's, that, that's huge on that side.

**Evan Troxel:** Scott Bromic side with, where products are going and what innovations and technology you're employing?

**Scott Smith:** for us, again, it's that design, performance and efficiency ethos. Um. and it's responding to customer. A lot of our position then beyond what we'll incorporate into a Struxure position, if it is in more fixed, um, structural circumstance, not a, not a pergola. A lot of, a lot of the innovation that we need to bring to market there is about integration and it's integration into cavity or ceiling.

Um, heat is a wonderful thing to create comfort, they're not around other materials. Um, so a lot of our design aspect there is about Um, how that couples together, factoring ceiling cavities, ensuring that spaces are minimized, that there's no heat impact on other materials. And we come close to a lot of others and, and, you know, you would know [00:37:00] this Evan and Cormac far better than I do that there are a lot of material changes and a lot of choices out there, whether it be PVC, whether it be fabrics, etc. Sheeting and boarding that are used in sealing now. Um, a lot of our reference has to be on how to design in and to integrate with that. Um, equally then it is how to ensure that with everything we do with new product that is coming out that we get performance in, um, minimum footprint. And if we are running near materials in recess, that that is done in a truly integrated fashion in the smaller space, or if we're mounting on surface, that again, that that is as close as possible to the surface without creating any impact. Otherwise, I mean, Cormac, you mentioned before the Eclipse, it is how we integrate additional feature into the product. That's going to add the experience of the consumer. Hence the Eclipse with lighting function. Um, the rest of it's then, um, just listening to consumers and what they need.

**Evan Troxel:** I love that you're doing the work for us,

like that, that material research, that's, that's huge. [00:38:00] And, and again, the kind of going back to the last. round of conversation regarding early engagement. I mean that you get to prompt me as the architect and ask the question, well, what's the ceiling material? And maybe I don't know yet, but maybe I do. And if, even if I don't know what it is, you can say, well, here's what

to look out for. Because you know more about that world than I will, right? And, and, and I don't have the time to do a deep dive into material science. And can I mount a heater in or on this thing? How, you know, like, what are the tolerances, all of those things. I just get to tap on your shoulder and you will tell me your experience with that because you want your product to have a successful installation, right? I mean, it, it totally makes sense. And as a design professional, to be able to rely on you as a resource for that. And any building product manufacturer, I would hope, goes to those lengths and, and can bring up the questions I should be asking as a designer [00:39:00] throughout the process.

Um, I, I think that's huge. I also love the Eclipse line because I like the idea of getting a twofer, right? You, you've got light and heat coming out of The same thing. And, and, and we have options to kind of control both. Are you also looking at like technology, uh, as far as like controlling and things like that with, what are

**Scott Smith:** Indeed, our view, our viewpoint is very much similar to Scott's, hence our, we're not going to create an ecosphere control because we will either, or are mapping to couple in with Scott's, uh, greater mesh technology because we're a component of what then becomes the outdoor environment. Whereas Scott's the principal mechanism for the outdoor environment, um, ours is to couple in.

So we will couple with him or. under control position coupling with a BMS, or, or if it's a pre existing simpler Struxure, stand in our own right with the same technology, linking into Alexa, linking into Google, or um, standing alone on an app function, which gives full [00:40:00] functionality. Consumers expect these days, and that's something that we can and need to deliver. Um, but then linking in a more complex environment, it's really Scott's ecosphere, or similar to that, that then becomes the overriding aspect, and we need to be able to work with that. So ours becomes then the protocols that they use.

**Cormac Phalen:** See, and the great thing about that is that most of the times when we're trying to sell these types of options to our clients, the thing that they're looking for is, low maintenance or, take the thinking out of it and look for that turnkey option rather than, parts and pieces or how do things, like, Oh, okay, I've got, uh, pergola.

Now I have to go and add this. I have to add that. I had to add this in, you know, not only does that drive costs, but it also drives, the aesthetic impact as well. And to be able to kind of integrate those is, is definitely something that's kind of a selling point to architects because you're now saying, that you.

are able to provide an entire package to them of, of [00:41:00] heating, of lighting, of sound, of all of these things. And you're taking the thinking out of it. You're, you're making it easier to sell to a client. for an architect to

sell to a client that it's something that, far more palatable and in something that in, in our case, when we're always looking for those, well, what is the next thing for us to value engineer out?

You're like, well, we don't want to do this because, you have a full integrator. So, oh yeah, I don't want to do that. Let's keep that. Yeah. So, it gives us something to fight for

**Scott Selzer:** I mean, with Bromic uh, Scott, you know, like as well with, with it where it's, You're taking the technology, um, that's out there, you know, and, and kind of what's next for us is, I think AI, obviously it's been a big word for a long time now, but I mean, I think over the last couple of years, it's even getting, getting more, but you know, you're, it should just be a smart pergola that. that opens and closes and does its things where you don't really have to say much to it. Um, obviously we're going to be doing voice as well. So you can just [00:42:00] talk to it and you can say, turn on my heaters and, you know, close my louvers or, Hey, change my louvers to 46%. And it goes right to 46 percent because we know exactly where everything's at. And so it's, it's a really unique, um, operating system. And I, you know, from an architect standpoint, like you were just saying, we need to make. Things easy for you guys that that's our job, right? We want to make it easy for you So you guys can go spec it in to the jobs and that you're you're you're happy with the end result

**Evan Troxel:** so speaking of your target audience, give the listening audience an idea of who your target audience is. I mean, you just, you just talked about making it easy for us, but, and then maybe give some examples of how you're doing that.

**Scott Selzer:** yeah, so, I mean, obviously the, the A+D community for us is, is a, is a consumer of ours, but we always look to the end user as well. Right? So, we were just talking about all the different, uh, aspects of where you can go with that, um, from, from residential to commercial and [00:43:00] commercial having all those. And, um, and so it's, it's, it's quite overwhelming, like, for even just like, for a manufacturer, like, I'm sure, you know, Bromic Scott wouldn't agree with this is, is like, we have so many different clients. How do you. How do you answer all of their questions? You know, demands, I guess, and do that. And so we've been trying to make a very flexible product that can both be residential and commercial.

And there's different things that go with both. And, um, I think that's important to look at as well. I mean, I think the same thing with, with the heaters, right? The, I, I just installed two Eclipse on my back porch, right? I mean, like it looks great here, but it also looks great in a restaurant. Right? So, I mean, um, I, I think that's important to look at it from a product standpoint.

**Scott Smith:** Yeah, I would agree. Consumers that are in demand or the changing position, I think we have both, whether it be, um, Scott Seltzer or myself had businesses that were involved around, that at least [00:44:00] started probably, primarily around the hospitality space, whether that be a restaurant or a hotel, and then ventured into the residential, because they were the core aspects of where the outdoors started to evolve and was being used.

Um, there's still, uh, the cornerstone, I think, of both of our businesses, but what Scott really, I think, was touching on there, and what I agree with is, It's it's quite very broad the areas that end up, the product ends up going to now. If I touched on one which is, I think, close to us now, uh, in a big way in terms of evolution that really captures how we're changing the way that we live is the mixed use multi residential space where we're seeing a lot of change.

Um, we're certainly seeing pockets around the North American market, and this probably then comes to heat um, more so, whether that would just be in And it runs to the provision of amenity, and whether that would be just in common spaces or now on balconies, we're seeing a lot of change where we have limitations on space, cost, um, cost envelopes, and what [00:45:00] people can afford and afford to build and how they then use that space. I don't think, you know, five years ago, and I'm going to step away from Pergola and Outdoor Heat now, I don't think I ever would have seen multi residential constructions being built with gaming rooms, with work pods. With pet spas, which quite surprises me, but true. With, um Uh, experience based kitchens, um, and then very much so then we're heading to the outdoors to communal spaces that are for people to gather in because people now are living that way far more than they ever have and they will continue to live that way far more into the future. So we're seeing a lot of demand coming to us from that and probably will bring us demand around product changes. Um, I think over time, um, it's a really interesting space for us, uh, well, I think for everybody as that continues to change. Um, you know, gone are the days I think where as a population we can all expect to live in a single family home, as saddening as that is for the future, it is what, [00:46:00] It, it, it is what society's come to and at the same point in time it's something we need to be able to adapt to as well. I think that outdoor areas are really critical to that and I think the design community does as well, hence what's changing for us and hence what's bringing new challenges to us as well as to how we then build product for that. Whether that be on a balcony or whether that be in a communal area.

**Evan Troxel:** What types of resources do each of your companies offer to the design team throughout different phases of design? So I know Scott Smith from the Bromic side, and we've had links to this in some of our episodes where there's design assist. you guys will help The design team on the architectural side, figure a bunch of stuff out, but maybe you can elaborate on that.

And then Scott Selzer, I'd love to hear from your side as well.

**Scott Smith:** Very much so. I mean, at the end of the day, what you want is client satisfaction. That's the end user. You want them to be comfortable in the outdoors. And I'm sure Scott will also touch on this far more deeply, but it's to engage from the the design position all the way through to the sale and post sale to ensure that, you know, beyond the sale, that the installation then goes right.

[00:47:00] So we, our aim is to inject ourselves into the process there for the very reason, uh, Evan, that you touched on before, that we're an integrated product around heat, where you've got other materials in the area and limitations. And it's our job to be the expert on that, to help you, because You're dealing with a hundred things at once in the design community, whether it be that, whether it be concrete, whether it be steel, whether it be floorboarding, whatever it would be. Um, you cannot be an expert on all materials or the application of every product. So we consider it as our job to help you through that design solution to provide what's right for the consumer. Good design principles say that we'll do that to ensure efficiency and best sustainability for the area as well.

Heat where you need to heat, don't heat where you don't need to, and use the right level of heat and use it when you want it through control. So we want to link with, um, the design audience around that design up front and then step that through and cluster correctly for the application as well. Then ensure that At the installation point, after the specification has been done, we're equally helping [00:48:00] the general contractor or the installer as well to ensure that whole life application happens.

So we'll use that through a design service up front and then through a tech support service that steps through the sale post. That, that really is, I think, what designer should look for a need in, a supplier of any material of substance that they're putting into a, um, into an environment. And I'll let Scott touch on it now, but I'm sure he's probably quite similar.

**Scott Selzer:** Yeah, I mean, as a former educator, it's all about education, right? It's, you know, educating the A+D community about your product. It is having a support staff there. and we're very similar in our companies and how we go about it, and it's probably why we've been successful, right? And so it's, it's, um, at Struxure, we saw a demand on the commercial side. So. Um, we have a dealer network, but mostly that was more residential. Some of them did some good commercial, but a lot of them kind of stayed in that residential. And so we saw a big need to do a commercial direct team. And so we have that, and we sell, you know, directly to big commercial contracts all the [00:49:00] time, going through the A+D community.

We have lunch and learns and all those types of things set up. Um, and then we have the design inside. So When you're designing a Struxure, you don't know how, how long these louvers can be and how big the zones can be and all those types of things. And so that's where really we come in and we, we kind of help you design.

You give us the space and we will put everything inside of it for

**Evan Troxel:** I love the whole idea of outsourcing my valuable time just to an expert that, that to me is, it shouldn't be a secret, but it kind of is. I mean, this is the kind of thing where architects tend to reinvent the wheel over and

over and over on projects, because we're trained to do that.

We're, we're trained to start from a blank page and, and it's, it's, A lot of times I think we will just take what we've learned in the past and apply it to the future. But that's not, if we don't even know what's possible, we don't even know that the team exists to do this. I mean, if architects, if you're out there and you're not using the

design assist teams from these manufacturers,

you're really missing out.

This is, uh, it

feels [00:50:00] extravagant when you, when you get to send something over and, and get back and just respond to it and not have to be

**Cormac Phalen:** Well, when, when we have a client who says, you know, well, Evan, you know, you're the expert. You tell me what I can do. And it's like, well, no, I'm not the expert. Scott and Scott are the experts. And

**Evan Troxel:** It's, it's, it's really

**Cormac Phalen:** exactly.

But, you know, so what we do is we go to a design assist and we say, okay, I've been tasked to do this.

Can I do this? And he said, well, you can. But you might need to do this or this, or can I integrate heat into this? Well, you can, but you need to think of this and this, and then that actually puts us in a better light when we're saying, go back to the client and say, okay, as the expert, these guys said, as long as we make sure that we're like, you know, integrating, I mean, In the past, decade, you know, Evans, Evans, right?

I mean, we are always trying to like, you know, reinvent the wheel, but the wheel's already out there and why reinvent the wheel, go to the right people and ask them the right questions. You may not know the right questions, but guess what? The [00:51:00] right people know how to answer or ask those questions for you and help you.

You know, give an educated advice to the client because ultimately, you know, you know, Scott, as you're saying, as, as an educator, we're educating the client, but we need to be educated just as much. And so there's no way around it. it has to be a, symbiotic relationship or, we do the wrong things.

**Evan Troxel:** well, I, I want to wrap up, but I want to touch one more subject here and it came up in our, the last episode in our series with Thomas Ventura of Gensler. And we were talking about sustainability and outdoor spaces, and I want to touch on sustainability from both sides. Both of you as product manufacturers and just, I want to, I want to hear how you are thinking about sustainability in regards to your products in regards to the spaces that your products are being installed in and, and help us understand what's going on in that realm when it comes to your business.

**Scott Smith:** it's an interesting topic. Uh, look, the first position is from an, from an [00:52:00] internal point. And I'm sure Scott's very similar again for our business. We take sustainability, um, seriously, I think as every business should. So our practices internally align with what I think all businesses should be. And for me, we use green power. we have for a period of time, in our core premises, um, you know, that's solar or green sourcing at any point in time, our practices are then around sustainability and recycling that extends to product in the way that we package our product and the way that we put it to market, as well as the design around the materials. Now, in saying that, that can all sound really good and warm and fuzzy, but in the end, I think there is. when they get applied to market, there has historically been a little bit of a tinge around outdoor space and then potentially the application of certain products, whether that be heat or cool, et cetera, to say that might be a waste. I think that's, then again, an educational position and an awareness point because outdoors are very important now to the built environment and how they're used, at least from our belief and perspective from dealing with the likes of yourselves [00:53:00] and, and the A+D audience. And the interesting part there is, You know, on a calculation base, the usage of an outdoor space on an energy footprint position is actually less than an indoor space, if it's getting utilized, because you're only heating when you need to heat.

It's radiant heat, so it's heating you, it's not heating air. It's not like an internal HVAC system where it has to run all day, every day, to cycle and cycle the air, um, for a health position, because otherwise it's dirty air, and to keep the air at an even temperature. Lighting is natural light. Um, and cooling is generally natural cooling through, you know, natural breeze. Um, and then, you know, you have the opportunity to control the environment through what is really principled around Scott's, um, structural environment where we couple into it. And I think a lot of our reference there is teaching that. sustainability position that can occur in the outdoors and the efficiency position that can come with well designed products and a well designed area where you shade the area you [00:54:00] need to shade, you heat, you cool the area you need to heat where people are going to be there and you have an understanding that if you can utilize it properly, your energy consumption is very little, um, on a, on a, you know, on a volumetric basis. That, that's the position that we take to it, but then we make it our job to ensure that people are informed. Um, I'd probably leave it there and hand it over to Scott. I think his position is probably fairly close.

**Scott Selzer:** the square foot price, right? From indoor to outdoor. I mean, putting our Struxures on and all the gadgets is, is definitely cheaper than doing inside.

**Scott Smith:** and a lesser material, and a lesser material material. Yeah, and hitting on the sustainability. You know, our parent company, the AZEK company, publicly traded company, their biggest brands are around plastic, right? So they actually are recyclers. And so they have actually bought up a couple of recyclers. And so they're taking, you know, they're taking this, this, this bottle, this plastic bottle, and it's, it's kind of a, they call it a full circle,

**Scott Selzer:** Right.

So, and why were they [00:55:00] interested in us?

Why all this plastic company doing the recycling thing? Why were they interested in a aluminum pergola manufacturer? Well, aluminum is a very green and friendly. product. our, products was around 50 percent recycled material, and then it's a hundred percent recyclable, you know, when the lifetime way down the road, 50 plus years or whenever you want to change it out. so I, I think it was, it was the AZEK company is, is a true company that actually really does. It's just not like this greenwash type of thing. They're, they're really, they put the investment into the recycling of it all, uh, so that it can go into the products.

I mean, obviously that once you have recycling, um, product, it's a little bit cheaper to then put that into the product and, and so forth like that. So they are saving money. So I think from a financial standpoint and from a, an eco standpoint, they're doing a great job and we're just glad to be part of that.

But obviously being aluminum, there's a lot of aspects that are very similar to plastic.

**Evan Troxel:** [00:56:00] Great. Well, have

learned a lot today, uh, definitely picked up some new information here. And so I appreciate both of you taking the time to sit with us and have this conversation. Is there anything else that either one of you want to add to the conversation before we, we wrap this one up?

**Scott Selzer:** I just wanna say, you know, thank you to you guys. I mean, obviously the A+D community being architects, um, those types of things that that's, you know, it's not the easiest job like you're pointing out, right? You, you need to have a team behind you. We are your team behind you. And, and I just wanted to say thank you for, for the opportunity,

**Scott Smith:** Yeah, I'd resonate with that. I'd then say We appreciate you. You, as you said before, Cormac, we like it when you test the boundaries and you think outside the box. It

does challenge

us greatly. We might scratch our heads and, and end up frowning, but, uh, it takes us in new directions and you're responding to what consumer needs are.

So it's, you know, the collaboration that has to happen between suppliers and, and, or [00:57:00] manufacturers such as, uh, Scott and ourselves, or Bromic and, and Struxure. With the A+D community, I think all manufacturers in the building industry should cherish

because it's what drives innovation. Um, and ultimately that leads to a better future for the consumer and for us in general, because it drives us, whether it be on that sustainability piece, whether it be on efficiency, whether it be on application.

Um, and we love to listen.

**Cormac Phalen:** Yeah, don't,

**Scott Smith:** enjoyed every moment.

**Cormac Phalen:** don't forget that aesthetics part too, because, of all of the things we like to glom on to that too, because, when we're, we're looking for those solutions, you know, we're looking for all of the things that you're, you're talking about the cradle to cradle type aspect of sustainability and, and all of the integrations.

But at the end of the day, when we can say that we can deliver all of that in a, well designed package is something that, not only will it's something that we always come back to when we say, we're going to keep coming back to these guys because we know what they can deliver, but also it's [00:58:00] something that we can have an investment in that we can invest our clients in so that they, feel comfortable with these decisions.

**Scott Smith:** Agreed. That's, that's the strive for us.

**Evan Troxel:** do appreciate

good

design. Right? And, and they may not know why they

appreciate good design. They may not have that sensibility, but, but it

still holds true. Like there's, it's one of those things. And especially when, when like to reinforce what Cormac just said, when it, when it's, when it's a yes and we

get to add, we get to add this integration into our design and it looks good or, or, and it's invisible and you don't notice it,

but it's, but it's amazing.

Like that to me is, is really where like the magic happens with

**Scott Smith:** Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely.

Yeah. that as

**Cormac Phalen:** Well,

yeah, thank

**Evan Troxel:** All right. Thanks guys. It's been a great conversation. And we'll have links to everything in our show notes for this episode. Everybody head over to archispeakpodcast.com and check out the links to Bromic Heating and [00:59:00] Struxure in the show notes.

And, that's it for

this one. Thanks

**Scott Smith:** Pleasure. Thank you.

**Scott Selzer:** Thank you. I.

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