

LeaderImpact Podcast - Ep. 31 - Andrew Denysov - One Year Later in Ukraine

Lisa Peters 00:00

Welcome, everyone to a follow-up LeaderImpact Podcast with Andrew Denysov off from Lviv, Ukraine. We first introduced you to Andrew in April 2022, and a podcast number eight. And we chatted about living out our purpose in uncertain times. Ukraine has been at war for over a year, and we wanted to check back with Andrew, the CEO of Tech Vision on how he, his family, and his country is doing. Thank you for joining us, Andrew, it is great to see you.

Andrew Denysov 00:35

Thank you for having me. Lisa. Thank you so much. It's a pleasure.

Lisa Peters 00:38

Yeah. So you know, I'm gonna jump right in. Because the good thing is we have connected on LinkedIn on Facebook, so I see you throughout the year. So it's always nice to actually talk to you in person. But the first time we ever tried to connect, I know that you had a lot of issues with power, with the Internet. And now I'm reading a lot of issues. I mean, it's winter, the heating infrastructure is being attacked, water issues. So really, I'm looking for sort of that overall update from you since you know, we talked in March 2022. How, how are you doing any closer to the end? How do you feel?

Andrew Denysov 01:16

Oh, Lisa, it's been a year. So Oh, that was March. Oh, that's yeah. So lots of stuff happened for this year. So yeah, I'm actually Russia tech energy sector, a Ukrainian energy sector last few months. And back then. We had that outage, just with internet connection. I remember that our that previous episode we recorded from the second attempt, I guess. That's exactly. So that was exactly first time when we had the first kind of power outage with the internet connection and stuff like that. So for that, from that moment, I mean, yeah, we didn't have that power outage like we had, especially December, January, and probably part of February when they very, very targeted, they targeted actual the energy sector. So they thought that, you know, they will destroy it, and put us on our knees. So we will stand against our government and say, no, just stop the war. And just, you know that we don't want to stop the war. We don't want to stop the war. I want to emphasize again, we want to win. Because it's a war not a year, not six years, not but 400 years. But we need to dive deeper into it a little bit to the history. But so this is a very crucial moment right now for us. So yeah, last three weeks, we don't have any power outages, thank God and, you know, thank our government and local like city and state and country services, they do an amazing job. 24/7 they renew it, and we are good right now. So having this conversation with rest of the world to say what's actually happening right now in Ukraine.

Lisa Peters 03:14

Okay, good. Thank you for that. How are you and your family doing? Just personally? Just want to check in with you?

Andrew Denysov 03:22

Yeah. So Lisa, we didn't tell you that. But for that last year, we have a very, very major change right now. So we're expecting a third baby. Yeah. That was going to tell you right, on the podcast right now. So no text version, no LinkedIn, or Facebook message just on the podcast. So the due dates will be somewhere late in May. So God blessed us with a with a boy, it's going to be David. And we're doing good. So yeah, thank you for this.

But yeah, but I know what you're asking. So, you know, for the year, we probably would get used to a new reality, you know. For example of first these first, probably two months and we had a podcast and march was probably the busiest and the most difficult time of our entire lives. Mine, my wife, my family, kids, you know, so it's, you know, I pray that no one in this world will have the same what we had. I'm talking about like Ukraine at all, not just my family but you know, comparing to what we had my family and those families, let's say on the front line, of course, we're in a different realities, right? But emotionally that was difficult. So for example, kids, they are They didn't have a chance to go to school everything was online now they go to school so schools reopen their doors. So my younger she's seven will be on March 17 on the St. Patrick's Day so she went to for like first grade is a correct word like that. So they have they can have that experience of school with kids you know, schoolmates, etcetera, etcetera. But of course, with some, you know, moments nuances, for example, we still have like a air raids or air sirens. So, the reality is still different, right. So, when we have an air raid siren everything here, for example, schools and kindergartens, they have to take the kids and go to the bomb shelter. It's okay when it's warm outside like spring or summer. But they go to you know, bomb shelters, which are actually created as bomb shelters like, you know, just like simple, you know, like basements or parkaids, cold, dark and not created for the purposes. Gyms, closer like restaurants, coffee shops, so the economy has to work, but they have to shut down everything for that moment, because, you know, there are people, right? So, you know, like different dimensions, different stuff, but according to the family, so probably we get used to this, and we try to, you know, not try, but we have to keep, you know, going live in, you know, creating, and as you can see also our families that will be extended as well.

Lisa Peters 06:47

Yeah. You know, I mean, we talk about our children, and we go into school, and it's like, it's, it's, you know, not that it's normal by any means. But I think of our children, how is it affecting them? How is this affecting their mental health? Is there anything you're doing as a parent? I mean, these are our future. I mean, the children, that sounds like a song, so cliché, but what are what are parents doing to sort of maintain this normality of life? Which is not going on around you?

Andrew Denysov 07:16

Yeah, yeah. It's not normal for like, you know, six, 7, 10 year old? No. So you know, just

Lisa Peters 07:24

To go to a bomb shelter.

Andrew Denysov 07:26

Yeah. You know, yeah, we were praying and thinking about that, in the beginning, what will be our position as parents, you know, for kids, to, you know, for example, hide or change some kind of reality or give them a crucial like reality, like reality, as it is. So we try to do that something in the middle. So they have to know the reality, right? So what's really happening, what's really happening? So they heard like, explosions in the city, they heard they saw the big, you know, smoke when they targeted kinda oil stations like that in our city or something. They see the news, they hear the news, right? So they have to know it, they have to know it, but at the same time, we need to balance that because you know, how you ask how did they this effect? Actually, we don't know how it effects. We will see that probably in a few years. We can tune it, we can help right now in the middle. So we try to just explain them the reality. Why it's happening right now. But every single evening and morning, we pray, because just for peace in our hearts and minds. And for, you know, for the victory as soon as possible. So we try to manage this wisely as parents, it's difficult. It's difficult. We'll see the result after that. But we have to do something now. So this is our strategy. And you know, God gave us smart people and wise, sorry, children, people as well, of course. So they understand, I think, but we pray that they don't have that stamp on their mental health bad stamp on mental health for following years. So we don't know. I mean, we will work on that.

Lisa Peters 09:25

Yeah, I know that. The last time we talked, there was a lot of exit through Lviv to Poland, a lot of families. I mean, your city was tripling in population as they as they went through. I know just in a report I read there was I think about 500,000 Ukraine immigrants have been accepted to leave. And a Canada has accepted to date I believe just over 150,000. Your family never chose to leave your wife and children. And how is that today they still feel Like, this is the right thing is that is it still?

Andrew Denysov 10:02

Yeah. So now today, Lisa, we can tell you that that was the right decision. Again, each family has their own like, so I can, I can comment and I can tell about my family. So the culture of our family, it's very difficult for us, me and my wife, my wife, and I actually be a part of each other. So, you know, like back then, as husband and dad, I need to tell you that really, I want it, they will go like, like, leave the country because that was uncertainty. So we didn't know what's going to happen like next second, next moment, right. So but now, and if you remember, like I said, my wife said, very firmly, I won't go anywhere without you. So and she didn't. So now. Yeah, so for our family, that was the right decision. That was very emotional, it was difficult.

But we analyze, like pros and cons, etc. So that was good. So we were together. So yeah. But still, yeah,

Lisa Peters 11:06

Now I'm switching a little bit to Tech Vision, because you chose to stay in Ukraine and employ IT people in Ukraine. It's to me, you probably have contract workers all over. How are they doing?

Andrew Denysov 11:21

Yeah, yeah. So the part of the I mean, of course, that part where we leave my family and I so we live on a Western part of Ukraine, which is just like one hour drive from the border with Poland, which is NATO zone, we just like, I consider personally, I consider this, like, the safest part of Ukraine in this all entire difficult situation right now. worse situation, right? So we like since day one, I said to all my, like, employees in Ukraine who are not in this part of Ukraine, say, Hey, come here, relocate, etc. That was difficult for them, you know, because they, you know, they have, it's not just, you know, take the laptop, you know, and go or just close the office or whatever. They're a family, they have families there, you know, and not just like, like, wife and kid, but you know, like everything, you know, parents, grandparents, extended family, etc. So someone decided to stay there. And some are there, but some actually still moved from Dnipro, Kharkiv the cities that were especially like Kharkiv was under the fire. So they moved here. And but yeah, but especially those who in this part of Ukraine, they're here, all is good. And, you know, I mean, like, I'm grateful to God for our guys, because they are very, very, like open-minded. They are, you know, like pro-Ukrainian. So of course, they, they had to, they decided to stay here and do some good stuff for you, of course, for the victory for the country.

Lisa Peters 13:01

Yeah. Now, I know that you personally, I mean, you're, you started this company with some men in the United States, are you able to travel back and forth? Or how does that work?

Andrew Denysov 13:13

Good question. No, no. So there are just like a very small part of Ukrainian males who can travel. So who have three, at least three kids with age under 18. So theoretically, I'm going to be that, that type of male when David will come to this world, right. So also, those who are 60, with age of 60 and older, and the third parts is those who are like, have some kind of disabilities, you know, or sick or something like that. But that's a difficult procedure. And of course, those who are something work with like government, or they have some kind of special permission. So no, we don't have still we're in the martial law, and we cannot just travel. Or if you do something for like, humanitarian aids help Ukraine and local authorities, they give you some kind of special permission just for 30 days. That's it, but you have to come back to Ukraine, of course.

Lisa Peters 14:23

Wow. Okay. We had a fundraiser at one of our churches, and we had a group of Ukrainian nuns. Would that be right? I don't know if they're nuns. They came in it was a fundraiser for orphanages in Ukraine. Yes, Ukrainians. So I didn't know how I wasn't sure how many of them came and how they got here.

Andrew Denysov 14:48

So probably this that the last part of what I said so, for example, I was in the states in the United States twice last year. Are and first so because Oh yeah, that was summer and after that, so lots of holidays Lisa. So, my friends and my pastor he is and my friends and pastor of my church. He's a local city deputy if that's City Council deputy if that's correct. So, he is a, he's doing fantastic jobs, he's very pro city, you know, and help. That's why he was invited to that role as well. Because whole his life as a pastor has been doing an amazing job for the city for the state, etc. So then, of course, I mean, like, in the middle of the war, we have the new challenges as a church as well as Christians as well. So we started to brought cars with our partners together from Germany, and we bought probably more than 60 cars, vans, buses, like four wheel pickups, you know, for the front line, and the only one person who can give that permission. I mean, there are a few persons so the president, the Ministry of like, some kind of ministries, and local governor, so governor, with a good connection with our pastor, and they know that as a Christians of these guys don't lie. So if they say that they are going to help and bring some, some good stuff for Ukraine, they'll do that. And there was a mess. We brought like 60 cars, we brought like ambulances scars, you know, the ambulance cars, lots of humanitarian aid, etc. So they got provided that permission, like of course, for 30 days, 30 days, 30 days. So every time we have to request, so probably these guys did the same. And I assume but each story is very, very unique. So like, I cannot tell you for sure how they had it. But our story is that.

Lisa Peters 17:06

Yeah, so these cars that are coming in, are they then going out of Lviv to other areas, you talk to ambulances, you know.

Andrew Denysov 17:16

They are everywhere. These cars and vans and buses because of the vans and buses, we evacuated more than 40,000 Ukrainians from warzone to more safe areas of Ukraine. Yeah, yeah, for example, like that. Some four-wheel drive wheel drive car or pickup trucks, we gave them for our, you know, like, Army, the average period, that's four-wheel pickup truck live there probably like from two to four weeks. That's it? So they need a lot of them.

Lisa Peters 17:53

Wow. Well, and this leads right into my next question just about global business leaders, because people, the last time we chatted, we talked about the role of global business leaders and you know, how can people help you out? And how, how can they help you in this war? And you spoke of number one keep doing business with Ukraine. That was number one. Yes.

And you also said keep investing in Ukraine. Yes. So my question. I mean, obviously, people are still doing this. So we just heard the story of the dealerships. But do you feel our role needs to change or where are we?

Andrew Denysov 18:27

Okay, you know, you know, what, when I just heard what you quoted me, quote, I thought probably someone heard that. And they said, Oh, Andrew, you're crazy. Really? Invest and do the business with a country where the actual war is going. It's crazy, you know, offer or idea or suggestion, whatever. I agree, probably, of course. I mean, how can you invest in Ukraine, where you don't know what's going to happen with your investments tomorrow, let's say right? Of course. I mean, there are just some parts of the businesses are difficult to work, some of the businesses just died. But for example, tech, so I can talk from the tech perspective, right? So thank God for technology, thank God for internet, thank God for Zoom, you know, or you know, this stuff. So we do the work. We keep doing work. So we keep working. So for example, none of our client and I can tell you for sure, none of our client, no one left us since the first the beginning of the war, even the opposite we have grown. Yes, they have to mitigate risks. We have engineers in Ukraine, we have now engineers in our other parts of the world, we have fantastic engineers in Africa. So we have developed we actually had the Development Office way before the word so that helped us so much. But of course, like our passion, the way why we started the Tech Vision was created jobs and workplaces in Ukraine and connect their salaries with more stable economies like, you know, United States and Canada. So our focus is North America. And, you know, there are other businesses that, you know, let's say on hold, and they will renew. But what I know for sure Lisa, that sooner or later, and I just read this morning, Ukrainian morning, the intelligence say that probably by the end of the...so Russia will lose their, like, weapon potential, you know, we're, by the end of spring, let's pray and hope maybe that's going to be happen. Right. So, and that's going to be or sooner or later, we'll get the victory. And that will be really great. When people will start come travel to Ukraine, you know, invest into Ukraine and businesses, because we'll have a lot of work to do.

Lisa Peters 20:59

You will. Yeah. A lot of rebuilding. Well, yeah. So you know, you just said about Russia. Losing weapons. There's a potential. You last year, you talked about the mayor was it May 5, the Victory Day?

Andrew Denysov 21:15

Yeah, May 9.

Lisa Peters 21:17

May 9. Okay. So May 9. So we had done our podcast before that. And then May 9 came. So May 9 is going to come up again this year. What does it mean to you? What does that mean right now to you?

Andrew Denysov 21:27

So, yeah, that this year changed everything. So now we don't have May 5, fourth, ninth, or whatever, every day can be any day. So we are ready for every single moment. I don't normally listen, we're we don't think about that. Right now. We're thinking about one day, a victory day when this war will be not just stopped, but stopped because of the victory. And Russia will say that we lost, we are wrong. You know, and like, the new reality will come.

Lisa Peters 22:06

Yeah. Another topic we talked about last year was about cyber-war. And here I go. Quoting you again, you had felt that catastrophic cyber-war between Ukraine and Russia had not happened yet. And this is your industry. So I'm wondering if you can give us sort of an update to what is happening in regards to cyber-attacks?

Andrew Denysov 22:29

Oh, yeah, that's kind of I would say this is both way. War, cyber war. So they attack us. We attack them because they're smart. They have smart guys as well, I need to admit, of course. So yeah, we had some problems like in Ukraine, some kind of got like, like government stuff, etc. But we protected that. So it's not that very intense right now. But there are something happening that probably I'm not allowed to say that publicly right now.

Lisa Peters 23:07

And I think I mean, you said it, there's smart people on both sides. So when they if there's an attack, there's a retaliation. Like, I mean, yes, you guys. Well, I mean, I think what you're saying is there's smart guys on both sides. And you're, you're all prepared for this. Right. Okay. So I wanted I move a little bit, as a leader in the Hosana Church, we talked about that. I believe you're an associate pastor there. And I think this is a really, this is a critical time. And a year ago, people were crowding into the churches because they were afraid. And they prayed for hope and security in life. And you and you said again, you know, I love coatings, when the world gets darker, the light shines brighter. So I don't know where you're finding people in the community. Are they continuing to be strong in their faith? Are they losing faith? How is your church doing?

Andrew Denysov 24:00

Right now? Yes. So yeah, so of course, I mean, this year had different like, periods, phases. So now, like for example, in the beginning of the war, we preached we talked about like, hope, not losing hope, not losing heart, etc, right. But now so we're working on like, so for example, just recently I preached about like type of thinking, so we have to think positively right? So it's not just, you know, psychology say the topic for psychologists. But that's for everyone right? So, you know, now I would say that probably we back on track with that normal, so growing, you know, people and drawing them closer to Christ, you know, and giving hope, and, you know, today people are very, very open of listening about like, you know, a solid eternal hope, you know, and not just from They all are like religious guys, you know? No, no, no, no, no, no. I mean today, people who thought who about that, like in the beginning, like before the war

now they saw the church that they are not sitting in their four walls, and like teaching about some kind of God like kind of Bible or blah, blah, blah, you know, like the, like not normal guys, but they are doers. They are normal, practical, open-minded helpers, and they are doers. So they do the hell they are very open because we, every single church open their doors for people, so and people live there. They lived in our church for a almost a year. So they heard our sermons or songs, etc, that we interacted with them. So yeah, so we're just like, back on track with normal teaching about Christ because this is what actually Christ said. Go and make disciples.

Lisa Peters 26:06

So I just started, I know that you have been involved in YouVersion. And I started a devotion this morning called WordsTo Live By with Craig Groeschel. I think his name is. And it really as you talk about think positive, because it's, it's the words what's coming out? Like, what is coming out of our mouth, it's very different for me than for you. Have to keep thinking. The positive thinking because when I go right back to mental health of our children, ourselves, you know, our community, we have to keep talking the good thing. Yeah,

Andrew Denysov 26:44

That's right. And Lisa, you just mentioned about Craig Groeschel. So this is the senior pastor of Life Church located in, in multisite church in the United States. And they both actually the YouVersion. Right, so Bible app, which is we are the part of the development team. And we are very honored, and we're happy to do that. But what I what also can I want to tell you that and this is probably first time that publicly I'll tell this, so you probably the first podcast that I read. So in the beginning of the war, probably after our podcast, I think so I've got an idea in the gym, I'm yet in the middle of the war, I go to gym because you know, it's something that helps, you know, to live mentally well, I've got an idea that so there is a Craig Groeschel leadership podcast very famous in the United States. But the podcast in English, I am a proud, like, very, very significant part of my leadership. And, my friends over here is because of the leadership podcast, and that's why I heard about LeaderImpact from those folks as well. And that's why I love, love, love, so much LeaderImpact, and I participate and listen to past podcasts, you know, and do Q&A in Zoom, and interviews. So so I've got an idea to localize the podcast into Ukrainian. There is like more than 125 episodes. And so I message to my business partner and said, Hey, Serge, there is a really interesting idea. I'm not sure how you react on that. But I think that today, like never before Ukraine needs leaders with a values based on Christian values, because there are a lot of cool leadership, you know, like content, books, this is very high word leadership is everywhere. But why I love LeaderImpact, because we and as well, because this is the leadership based on Christian values. And he said, Hey, I mean, I'm in the past, I in the past actually had just like a pet project side project, I just helped, you know, sponsored localization of the Timothy Keller's, you know, sermons into back then Russian. So he's from Crimea, and now he's just speak Ukrainian. And that said, that said, so we started we gather the team, etc. And, but we faced with interesting issues, like thought that Oh, but we cannot just, you know, localize that we have probably have to ask permission of Life Church, so I prepared that my sales pitch, I call that you know, and, and they listen to that,

and I said, Hey, just don't say yes or no now. Think about that, you know, consider this, you know, think prayer, blah, blah, blah. And when I finished my word in Half a Second, they say, you've got our Yes. And I said, Wow, that's so cool. You know, so I was so happy of course, when we had the release, some kind of a first episode like by the end of 2022. We had, because you know, most of the team, the voiceover, etc, is in Kyiv someone is in Lviv. But now we're moving now. And again, I'm not a podcast guy, I don't know what's I'm YouTube consumer, not contributor. So I never like, I'm a tech guy. I didn't know that I'm tech entrepreneur done before. So that's why we have also I know that the challenges are opportunities in disguise. So the passion of this podcast now to reach millions of Ukrainians spread around the world, not just in Ukraine, because I heard statistics that, oh, again, this is for November 2022. I don't know what now. So around 7 million Ukrainians left Ukraine, because of the war. 7 million, but everyone definitely have access, it has access to access to the internet, so they can learn that. We hope that someone will come back, but we want to invest and grow leaders Ukrainian-speaking leaders around the world. And like I said, sooner or later, the victory will come. And we will build the new Ukraine and the new Ukraine, as well, we'll need leaders. So we will produce that precious leadership podcast content, and we will give that content for free. So we won't do any make any penny on that. So we just as a Tech Vision to such social project, we will just you know, sponsor that project for you. And that's it. Yeah. So Lisa, you know, that intro

Lisa Peters 31:45

I can hear all of a sudden your excitement just like raised. There's like this excited. So it is such a good project is meant to happen. I can hear that. How do people if they're listening, how do they find it?

Andrew Denysov 31:58

Oh, a good question. So we just we didn't launch that yet. But yeah, there will be so I probably should send you a link because the link is in Ukrainian. So if I tell you something in Ukrainian only Ukrainians will understand that right? So it's gonna be leadership but Craig Groeschel leadership podcast into Ukrainian so I'll just send you a link and you can put that in a bio or description of this episode. And thank you if you help me to spread the info. That will be really good. But again, there will be Craig Groeschel speaking in Ukrainian.

Lisa Peters 32:35

I love it. Yeah, he's a fireball. He is so good. Yeah, video, watch the video this morning. So I think my last question, you know, one of obviously your gifts and I can hear it in your voice. God gave you a gift to teach. And from being associate pastor, Tech Vision now you're with this podcast during it Ukraine? And I think maybe, and maybe you've answered this, but my question is like, What message do you want? You want to share? What message? Are you sharing? Where are you headed?

Andrew Denysov 33:10

Never, never, never give up. That's what we need, you know. Never give up. And that's, that's

what I'm will be also, probably teaching and preaching. Never give up. It means like, so. Yeah, we get it. We have a war right now. Reality. But life doesn't stop. And won't stop so we cannot stop. We won't stop we'll be growing living, will be creating, we'll be building. We'll be working, earning. Investing. And, and yeah, and I think like, we won't give up too, to spread the good word about the amazing country in the eastern part of Eastern Europe, I would say which the country's Ukraine with a smart people. And yeah, and just drove this awesome. You know, country,

Lisa Peters 34:09

Never give up. Well, I plan to one day see you. In person. I had planned a trip prior to the war and it got canceled. And now that I know you it's and you're going to have a baby in May. So there's going to be a family of three coming family of five ultimately, but I want to thank you, Andrew, for taking the time again, just to join us and, and give us this update. I think of you often and I know that I repost some of your stuff. So we just continue to pray for you and, and your country and your family.

Andrew Denysov 34:44

Thank you so much, Lisa. And you know, I want to say thank you. I'm grateful for this opportunity to have the honor to be invited to this podcast. Now second time twice, because it's very, very important right now. So we can spread the word what's happening right now from the Ukraine outside the outside the country. And, you know, I just got an idea. So I don't want to look sound sharp, but maybe next year, next March in March 2024, when we will record the third episode with some kind of from Ukraine. So and this is going to be totally another year totally another country, it will be after the victory episode, you know, and we will have Wow, conversation about what's about cool things, what's happening in this country and people will be able to travel back and forth. And that's on my prayers. And that's my dream.

Lisa Peters 35:47

All right. Well, thank you, Andrew. And that is our prayers as well that in one year we're talking again, and it's gonna be great. Yeah, yeah. We'll come back. All right. Well, sounds good. Thank you, Andrew. All right. Well, I appreciate Andrew taking the time with us and many people in LeaderImpact, and around the world are praying for Andrew. Well, that ends our podcast with Andrew, we ask all our listeners and viewers to continue to pray for Andrew, his family, his community, and all the people of Ukraine. Thank you for engaging with us. And remember, impact starts with you.