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Sustainability and Roofing Expert Mike Feazel Predicts a Bright Future for Solar Technology

Are you ready for what the next few years in technology will bring?



Image credit: Mike Feazel



The Oracles

A mastermind group for top entrepreneurs

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In this series called Member Showcase, we publish interviews with members of [The Oracles](#). This interview is with Mike Feazel, co-founder and CEO of [Roof Maxx](#), which uses plant-based technology to restore asphalt roofs. It was condensed by The Oracles.

Who are you?

Mike Feazel: I grew up in a small farming community just north of Columbus, Ohio. I moved away for a while, but now I'm back, and I'm the third generation in my family here. I'm addicted to travel, adventure, and exploring new cultures.

We have a patent pending for our plant-based roofing formula, which is environmentally safe and prevents asphalt shingles from drying out, adding to their lifespan. I have never done anything as disruptive as what my company is doing right now. There have been highs and lows, but I love the challenges and rewards of growing a business.

Roof maintenance and rejuvenation is a huge market that will be worth \$11 billion when it's fully mature. The need to protect and restore asphalt roofs is recurring — there's no "one and done" — so the business opportunity is here to stay.

What are you more skilled at than most people in the world?

Mike Feazel: My biggest skill is identifying talented people who fit our culture and then letting them do what they do best. I've learned not to micromanage. Failure is just as important as success. As long as the team is learning, growing, and correcting quickly, it's okay. There isn't a rulebook when you're disrupting an industry.

What are the core values that guide your business, and why did you pick them?

Mike Feazel: I don't see business and personal values as separate. They are one and the same. In business and in

life, treat people fairly and with respect, try your hardest to do the right thing, and stay positive, especially when things aren't going your way. That's the most difficult of all.

What's your favorite quote?

Mike Feazel: I have a great deal of respect for Richard Branson and how he lives his life and runs his businesses. One of my favorite quotes from him is this: "Respect is how you treat everyone, not just those you want to impress."

What was your biggest challenge starting in business? How did you overcome it?

Mike Feazel: Our biggest challenge has been skepticism that you can rejuvenate an asphalt roof. There's always skepticism about new ideas, but doubts fade as familiarity with the idea grows. When that happens, we expect to double or even triple in size. Early on, Elon Musk gave Tesla a 10 percent chance for success, but electric cars are here to stay. That's our story too.

The skepticism is still there but it's steadily decreasing. Awareness around bio-based technology is growing, along with demand for products that impact the environment in a positive way at a lower price. Our partners are global leaders in biotech and sustainable technology, so their credibility has helped us overcome this challenge. Battelle Labs, the largest private research and development company in the world, created our plant-based formulation. We also partner with America's farmers, Ohio State University, and the Ohio Soybean Council.

Our partners have helped us grow from a handful of dealers and employees to more than 400 locations and a large staff that is growing weekly. I believe we're still at the bottom of the hockey stick in terms of our potential growth. At our current pace, we'll surpass the largest roofing company in the country by topline revenue in 2021.

How do you define great leadership?

Mike Feazel: Great leadership isn't about control; it's about empowering people. I rarely insist things are done my way. Instead, I hire talented people and get out of their way. There's not one person in our company who isn't amazing at what they do.

My role is to supply the vision, especially in the early stages, when things can change by the hour. Each day, there is less ebbing and flowing than in the beginning. Then I just have to communicate the vision to the team, get their buy-in, and if needed, debate it and adjust. It's a team effort.

How do you identify a good business partner?

Mike Feazel: A great partner is someone you can trust and respect who has your back. For me, that's my brother, who is also my co-founder. He's been my partner for 30 years, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

We've nearly closed the business twice. To pull through, we had to learn hard lessons that gave us the skills to succeed: stick-to-it-iveness and patience. There's no way we could pull this off otherwise.

How do you prevent burnout?

Mike Feazel: I stay active by mountain biking and paddleboarding. I also love to read and research new technologies that are shaping the world.

I get inspired by the amazing business models of companies like Uber and Airbnb. With Airbnb, you get better service and a better experience for less work, hassle, and money. Why would you stay anywhere else? That's how I see Roof Maxx. We are "Uberizing" roofing in a grand way, and we're only at the beginning of what technology can do.

What would you like to be doing in three years?

Mike Feazel: In the next three years, I'd like to invest in a small solar power company. Moore's Law states that computer processing speed doubles every two years while the cost is halved. That principle applies to all technology, especially solar.

Environmental sustainability and solar power are so important. If you're burning natural resources, you're ruining rainforests and putting plastic into the ocean. The use of solar power is expected to double in the next five years. Soon, you won't be able to build a home in California that isn't powered this way. I believe the new "land grab" will be the rooftop, and I see a bright future.

Connect with Mike on [LinkedIn](#) or visit his [website](#).