

Interstitial Technology

A Business Case Study for Building a Wellbeing Economy

By **PivotAll**

Case Study Summary

This case study examines Interstitial Technology, a Colorado-based, full-stack engineering firm and worker cooperative focused on environmental sustainability, human rights, and art. As a worker cooperative and Public Benefit Corporation, Interstitial's worker-ownership model and flexible legal framework centralizes workers' rights and public benefit, moving past profit maximization, shareholder primacy, and hierarchical power structures. This incorporation strategy presents challenges, learnings, and opportunities explored throughout this PivotAll case study. Interstitial is currently made up of nine member-owners.

About the Case Study Subject

Interstitial Tech: Technology for a better world.

Interstitial Technology is a full-stack engineering firm that builds solutions for a better world. Their focus is on using their technology and engineering skills to make the tech world easier to navigate for businesses while modeling how organizations can maintain a structure that works for the benefit of its members, workers, customers, and the general public.

About PivotAll

PivotAll: Pivoting Businesses To a Purpose-Driven Economy

At PivotAll (pi·vuh·tl), we are working to pivot from "business-as-usual" to "business-that-benefits" all. We believe in transforming traditional business models into ones that prioritize social and environmental impact. Our team works closely with founders to identify areas where they can pivot their operations to benefit not just their bottom line but also the communities they serve. Together, we can create a sustainable future.

Acknowledgements

PivotAll is grateful to the Interstitial team for their patience, trust, and partnership throughout the interview and writing process. Special thanks to Paula Te, Chris Desnoyers, and Dan Fourie for taking the time to walk us through all the details. PivotAll also acknowledges that many member-owners of Interstitial Technology are physically situated on the ancestral and unceded homelands of the Chochenyo and Ohlone peoples, and that their work relies on data centers and physical infrastructure located on the ancestral and unceded homelands of countless indigenous communities who continue to protect the health of their local ecosystems.

Case study details and credits

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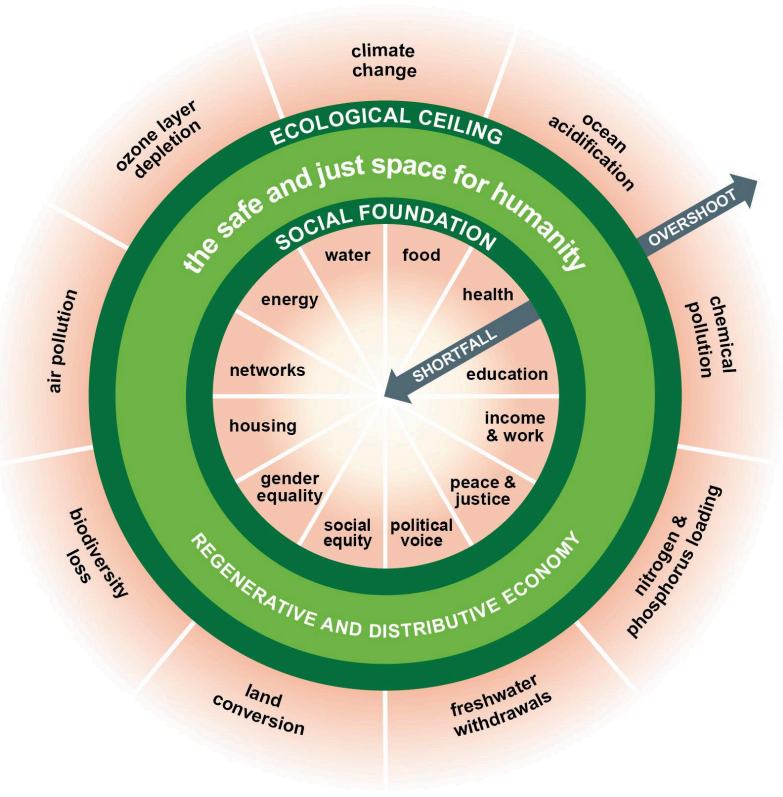
Table of Contents

What do we mean by a 'Wellbeing Economy'?....4
Case study introduction....5
How Interstitial Tech got started....6
The services....7
The process....8
Challenges and opportunities....14
Takeaways for entrepreneurs and business owners....16
The bigger picture....17

What do we mean by a 'Wellbeing Economy'?

A “wellbeing economy” describes an economic system intentionally designed to prioritize wellbeing for all. This kind of economy stands in stark contrast to growth-based economic models, which the United States and most other countries across the world have officially pursued as economic policy since the 20th century.

Growth-based economies prioritize the growth of a single, indiscriminate indicator called gross domestic product (GDP). GDP essentially adds up all the monetary transactions within the formal economy, over a certain time period, typically a year; it is unable to differentiate between beneficial economic activity and that which is harmful to society, making it a problematic metric for prosperity.



The “Doughnut” model for designing and assessing a wellbeing economy, developed by economist Kate Raworth.

Unlike a wellbeing economy, a growth-based economy is not intentionally designed to prioritize wellbeing. Further, GDP growth beyond a certain point contributes to the national and global decline of key social and ecological indicators, such as life expectancy and biodiversity.[1] Because it is just an aggregate number, it provides too little information, often excluding what matters to us while also including that which causes harm. Under such a system, businesses are rewarded for prioritizing power and profits at the expense of the common good.

That’s why PivotAll is inspired by fields of research--such as degrowth, post-growth, and doughnut economics--that align with the vision of an economy centered on shared wellbeing rather than abstract growth targets. In many ways, the wellbeing economy already exists in small pockets all over the United States. We see it in creative and innovative business models, alongside business owners who have figured out how to do the right thing for their workers, their communities, and the environment. We hope business case studies such as this one can inspire other businesses to pivot from business-as-usual to business-that-benefits all. The wellbeing economy will be here before we know it.

[1] Tim Jackson, Prosperity Without Growth: https://timjackson.org.uk/ecological-economics/pwg/

Case study introduction



Interstitial members discuss co-op strategy at their biennial retreat.

Every organization has technology needs, whether it's as simple as website design or as complex as launching a rocket into space. When considering how much an organization contributes to making a better world, the choices it makes to address its tech needs don't often garner as much attention as its public relations or marketing efforts. But how businesses and non-profits decide to build out their internal digital infrastructure can be just as important as the kinds of contributions they aim to make in the world according to their mission statements.

In a world that increasingly looks to extract value from its workforce without giving back, organizations that care for their employees are becoming more important than ever. When it comes to how an organization meets its tech-based needs, however, many are left choosing between the few tech giants that dominate the market. Meeting technology needs isn't often considered an opportunity for an organization to be mission-aligned, or to "do good." Interstitial Technology provides exactly that: a way to meet technology-based needs while also placing community wellbeing at the forefront of its operations.

Interstitial Technology[2] is a member-owned full-stack engineering cooperative focused on building a brighter future. By structuring the organization as a cooperative and Public Benefit Corporation (see **Table 1**), Interstitial's flexible legal framework moves past profit maximization and hierarchical power structures to focus on building technology that works for public benefit.

Interstitial's model isn't without its challenges, however. Building from the ground up has meant leveraging individual networks, working hard to gain visibility, and sacrificing stability for flexibility. Many of the member-owners at Interstitial have other jobs to supplement income, but as the organization's portfolio grows, its network will as well, presenting opportunities for growth and increased stability. At the end of the day, however, the engineers at Interstitial find that the freedom, agency, and flexibility that a member-owned consulting cooperative provides is well worth the challenges.

[2] Also referred to as "Interstitial" throughout this Case Study

Table 1: Public benefit corporations (PBCs)

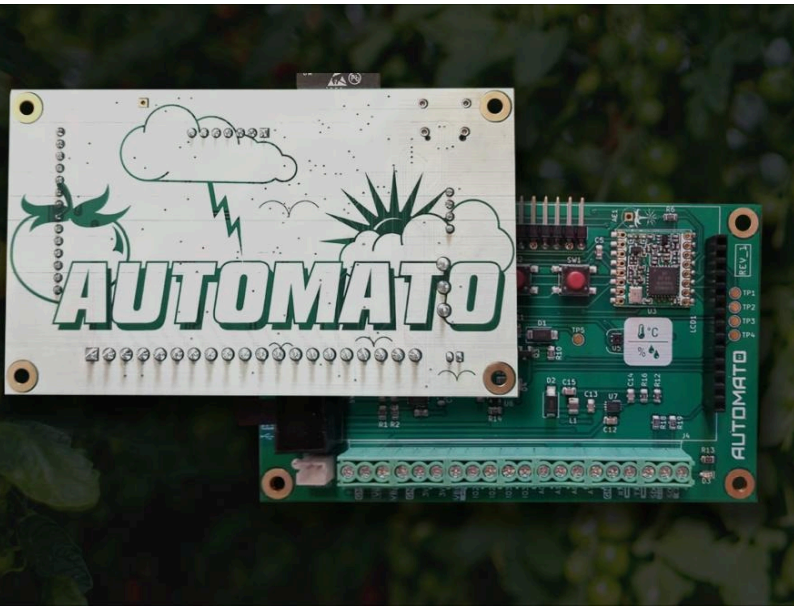
Public benefit corporations (PBCs) are for-profit entities that want to make a positive impact on society. Rather than being solely profit-driven, as many traditional businesses are, and without being beholden to the restrictions placed on nonprofits by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), PBCs are able to pursue both, blending for-profit attributes with non-profit values. In short, PBCs are an opportunity for organizations who want to create a balance between profit and purpose. Legally, these organizations have the space to pursue their goals without the threat of lawsuits from shareholders who are looking to maximize their returns. In many ways, PBCs can be seen as a middle ground between traditional corporations and nonprofit organizations:

Business Structure	Corporation	Public Benefit Corporation	Nonprofit organization
Purpose	Maximize shareholder value	Balance shareholder value with publicly stated mission	Advance a publicly stated mission
Business activities permitted	Unrestricted	Unrestricted	Must align closely with public mission
Reporting requirements	Standard financial reporting	Standard financial reporting, plus regular reports on progress towards mission goals	Financial disclosures and mission-related reporting
Tax benefits	No special tax benefits	No special tax benefits	Exempt from federal income tax and donations are tax deductible

Table recreated from Encyclopaedia Britannica: Public Benefit Corporations

How Interstitial Tech got started

Interstitial was founded in 2020, when three freelance engineers recognized a collective desire to work on projects with a greater focus on social impact, justice, and sustainability. As individuals, the founders of Interstitial had years of experience in the tech world and found themselves craving something more collaborative and reliable than independent consulting. That interest in collaboration blossomed into a member-owned cooperative model that aligned with the founders' interest in justice and equity, as well as their belief that technology could be used for good. Over the last six years, Interstitial has grown to include more than 10 member-owners.



Automato is an open source ag-tech project developed by Interstitial that supports the automation of DIY gardens and small farms.

The name “Interstitial” reflects the co-op’s horizontal structure; the member-owners see the organization as filling the space between its members and clients, symbolizing the essentiality of a well-connected fabric towards a functioning whole. This cooperative fabric also brings a significant amount of agency to the member-owners; it allows them to pursue projects that they feel are meaningful and beneficial to the world, rather than “contributing to an endless cycle of consumerism,” as one member-owner described it. Some members have sought to join Interstitial precisely because of the autonomy and agency that the organization provides, while others were drawn to the flexibility in schedule and workload. This sense of agency appeals to others, too, as a recognition that long working hours and demanding workloads leads to burnout.

The services

As a full-stack engineering and design organization, Interstitial offers services ranging from feasibility studies to PCB fabrication/testing; thus, the organization is able to partner with clients of all sizes. Its versatility reflects the mosaic of member-owners within the group and their diverse backgrounds. Because the horizontal organizational structure puts all members on the same level, the firm is able to adapt and grow its repertoire of services over time. Start-ups and large enterprises in a variety of industries have found ways to partner with Interstitial; with a customized approach for each client, member-owners have found that the flexibility offered by a cooperative model really widens the field of possibilities for the team’s potential clientele.

Engineering work can be extremely variable; the discipline is home to a broad array of different specialities: mechanical, chemical, environmental, aerospace, material and many more. The Interstitial team mostly focuses on technology-based engineering, including software and hardware development, digital product design, mechanical and systems engineering, and technology research and development. By offering both front- and back-end services, organizations across industries have found solutions to their tech-based needs with Interstitial.

The flexible nature of consulting work is bolstered by the organization's co-op model, which provides a workplace environment where peer-to-peer feedback is welcomed, engineers constantly learn from each other, and each member contributes value towards the whole. Because everyone who works at Interstitial also "owns" part of the organization, there is a shared sense of responsibility and a motivation to work hard. The co-op model has also created opportunities for the team to build relationships with organizations beyond one-off projects, and has even created avenues for further work.

One client, an educational technology company, was working with some of the engineers at Interstitial on a project that ended up having a larger scope, and the team's ability to pull in members with different skillsets allowed for the project to continue unimpeded. Another client, through working with Interstitial, realized they also required other services, and the team was able to pull in member-owners with the appropriate skillsets, which meant the client didn't have to establish a relationship with a new organization. This needs-focused approach also creates conditions for the Interstitial member-owners to expand their own knowledge and abilities, contributing to business development and further strengthening the team's comprehensive services.

The process

Project selection:

Consulting is typically contract-based, and Interstitial is no exception. In terms of contract negotiation, it's up to the team working on a specific project to negotiate the rates for that project. One benefit of contract-based work is the flexibility in rates that the team can charge, which aligns well with Interstitial's interest in providing accessible prices. Because Interstitial is a public benefit corporation (PBC), the member-owners have increased agency over what kind of work to take on, often bringing on projects that are open-source, local, or rooted in sustainability.

As a PBC, Interstitial is free to take on whatever projects they have the capacity for rather than having to protect a bottom-line at all costs, which creates a more meaningful workplace environment for its members. As explained by Paula Te, one of Interstitial's member-owners:

> "There's agency in what we get to work on, specifically also because we're a public benefit corporation, and Interstitial is not just [a] brand that is advertising that we're building technology for good, but we also really care about building technology that's not meant to be bought up by investors or spun off into a huge money-making thing."[3]

Pricing:

[3] Paula Te, from an interview conducted via Zoom on March 21, 2026

The full-rate projects they work on for larger, corporate clients allows the team to offer discounted rates to nonprofits, organizations looking for open source projects, or those who wouldn't otherwise be able to hire for consulting work. Currently, Interstitial leaves it up to each project's team of engineers and designers to determine how much to charge a client, but in the long term, some worker-members see the approach to compensation based on type of work conducted as an area the organization may want to formalize and iron out. The portion of each project (20%) that goes into a communal fund also contributes to the organization's stability and flexibility, because the organization is able to support members who do more nonprofit work via the annual distribution of unused funds.

Cost Structure:

All members are paid an equal share of the rate, up to 80% of a given contract, with the remaining 20% going to an internal fund. The fund first gets used for various co-op overhead such as accounting and legal fees. Next it pays for various internal co-op labor that membership has decided should be compensated through policy. For example, Interstitials pays their treasurer for hours they spend on bookkeeping, distributions, etc.; the admissions committee for hours they spend reviewing resumes and interviewing; and the IT committee for time spent upgrading servers, tools, website, etc. The internal rate is lower compared to what they charge clients, but the organization feels it's important to acknowledge co-op labor nonetheless. Dan Fourie, one of the co-founders, noted that "there's a balance between trying to account and compensate for every hour of time that goes into keeping a co-op alive, and keeping overhead low. We don't, for example, compensate for member time spent in member meetings or on internal communications." [4] At the end of the year, any leftover funds – usually about half – get distributed across the membership proportional to the number of hours worked, which achieves a small redistributive effect: clients and projects



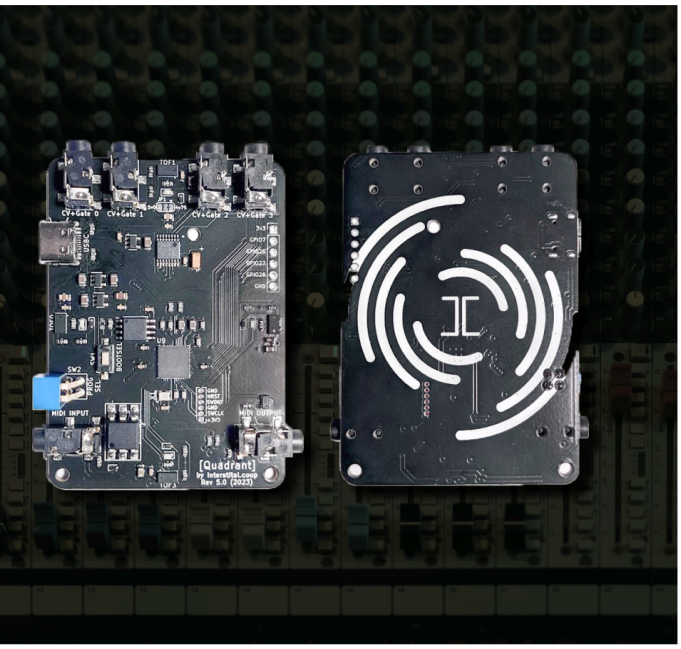
BIS-Kit App: A mobile app serving as a pocket guide for practitioners investigating human right violations. Interstitial is working with Global Rights Compliance to improve the functionality and usability of the existing BIS (Basic Investigative Standards) app used by first responders to international crimes.

[4] Dan Fourie, via email follow-up after the interview, September 16, 2026.

charged the full rate end up subsidizing labor for projects charged at a lower rate used for nonprofits, co-ops, artists, and internal work.

Workflow:

Another unique characteristic of Interstitial's process is how the team organizes its workflow. There are no designated project managers for all projects; team members take on various roles depending on capacity, relationship to the client, and need. The make-up of a team depends on the client's needs; for example, some clients prefer a consistent point of contact throughout multiple projects, whereas others are happy to jump from team to team depending on the subject matter.



Quadrant, developed by Interstitial, is an open-source human-computer interface (HCI) device based on an array of distance sensors. Interstitial describes it as "a digital theremin, but with a limitless array of audio/visual applications."

Typically, project management work lands on whoever brought in the client, as they are likely to have the closest relationship, but that's not always the case. One benefit of Interstitial's cooperative structure is that any overlap in skillset among its members allows for further flexibility and more comprehensive project planning. If one member overcommits and doesn't have capacity for a project, there are often other members with similar or overlapping skillsets who are happy to take on the work.

Governance

Interstitial's board has full legal power to direct co-op affairs, which includes signing documents, making policy, admitting or expelling members, and spending money. In practice, however, governance ends up operating more like a facilitation committee for the will of the membership. Board members are elected typically because they have some surplus capacity to take on more responsibility in a particular year, and "*perhaps because they have some vision for co-op direction/improvement that other members want to see happen,*" as Dan Fourie, one of the co-founders, explained.[5]

[5] Dan Fourie, via email follow-up after the interview, September 16, 2026.

Members are able to conduct the same activities as board members as make bylaw changes and elect or remove boardmembers, but ultimately the coordination difficulty and rarity of full membership action means that it falls to the board to keep things functioning. Dan also mentioned that board meetings can be held as infrequently as a few times a year, but "significant discussion and decisions happen asynchronously via board chat."[6] In terms of decision-making, the bylaws specify majority and supermajority for various official decisions, like electing board members.

In daily practice, the decision-making process is less well-defined. Dan noted that Interstitial "could really be better about defining our decision-making internally! But somehow it works okay." Typically, a member may float a proposal (e.g., to join a network, host a meetup, engage a subcontractor, change to a new tool, etc.) in a member meeting or in the internal forum, and after some discussion or refinement, the member may request to implement it if no objections are heard. This process is called **implicit consent**, or **passive consent**. A member may also propose a project requiring funding directly to the board, in which case the board will seek input from the rest of the membership in forum and meetings before approving it by board consent.

Policy creation works similarly: proposals are floated, discussed, refined in informal working groups (often over many months), and then brought to the membership for a vote. The vote is typically perfunctory, as the process by that point has mostly gotten everyone on board. Only one of Interstitial's policies in the last several years was passed with less than unanimity minus one, and even that was supermajority and "somewhat trivial," according to Dan Fourie, one of the founders. Members meet on a biweekly basis to discuss and work on proposal refinements. Engagement tends to ebb and flow, but the team sees around 5 or 6 members consistently showing up for meetings and decision-making. For tougher decisions, or in situations that call for them, there is a board that can take a vote, which is currently made up of three annually-elected members and is governed by majority.

Day-to-day governance within Interstitial looks something like a "**do-ocracy,**" where initiative taken by anyone is generally welcomed and encouraged. Most small tasks and daily functions are handled by committee or role (treasurer, IT committee, etc.), whose powers are fairly well defined by official policy. Other small tasks with no or low-cost, or that are easily reversible, can be taken on by any member. Examples include engaging in an interview as Interstitial, website updates, figuring out some legal question, etc. Members are encouraged to give notice of some action via the internal forum or chat so that other members are aware and can chime in if necessary.

Table 2: Do-ocracy

The term "do-ocracy" dates at least as far back as the early 2000s, when an open-source website management system project called Drupal started describing itself using the term. It quickly became popular within the open source movement, and started appearing in broader

[6] Dan Fourie, via email follow-up after the interview, September 16, 2026.

circles; A podcast called *A Way with Words* credits broad popularization of the word to the Occupy movement. In essence, do-ocracy is an anarchical system of participation that encourages voluntary contribution and is based on self-allocation for tasks that need to be done: whoever has the capacity, expertise, and interest to work on a particular task can self-organize to get it done. Use of the term ranges from the description of a group's general vibe to more detailed business-model processes. The website CommunityRule, which provides a "governance toolkit for great communities," describes consent-based decision-making (also referred to as "lazy consensus") as a blend of do-ocratic and consensus processes.

	Do-ocracy	**Consent**	**Consensus**
Decision-making	Individual-level	Group-level, based on lack of objection	Group-level, based on full agreement
Oversight	Minimal	Medium, there is risk that some members who would object haven't heard or been read-in on the proposal and their lack of dissent is taken as consent	High, requires all members to approve a proposal
Agency / Flexibility	High, members can make decisions based on capacity and interest	Medium, there's a lower barrier for approval given members don't need to actively vote in favor of a proposal	Low, reaching full agreement can be difficult, especially as the decision-making body's size grows

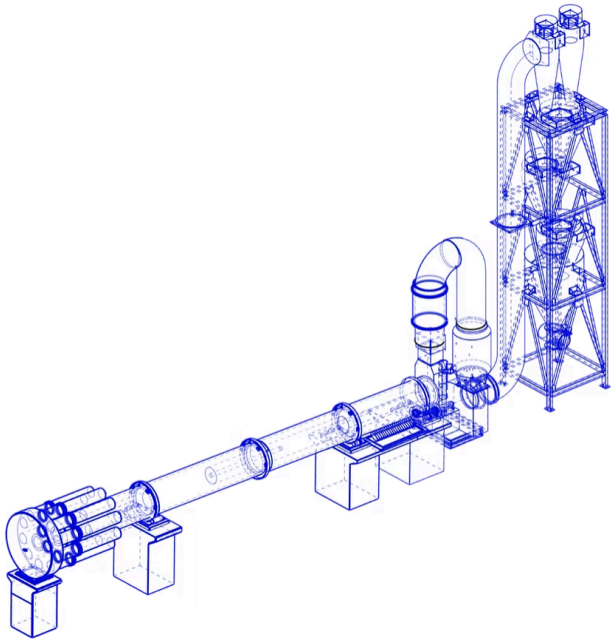
Note that an organization can utilize any or all of these strategies; they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For example, Interstitial utilizes do-ocracy for some day-to-day task-related decision-making, but opts for consent-based and majority decision-making for specific kinds of issues.

At Interstitial, "*what's the decision process?*" is an important and recurring question: "We rely a lot on norms, which we could do better about codifying."[7] New members often find it helpful to review old forum discussions to get an idea of the informal process. Dan recognized that a handbook might be one future project to help clarify things for everyone. The organization tried using Loomio for a few months to see if it would help formalize decision-making: "We were excited because it affords discussion and case by case selection of [the] decision making process."[8] Ultimately, though, it ended up being too much overhead for a new tool to catch on within the team.

[7] Dan Fourie, via email follow-up after the interview, September 16, 2026.
[8] Dan Fourie, via email follow-up after the interview, September 16, 2026.

Financials, operations, and approach to growth

Interstitial is set up as an intermediary between engineers and clients, allowing engineers to collaborate on projects where their skillsets allow it. Because the organization is set up this way, there are no physical assets held by Interstitial. The founders also opted to keep the “buy-in” fairly low for member-owners: anyone who feels their skillsets and interests align can join, and the fee is as little as a dollar. This makes it easy for folks to try out the Interstitial model, but has also resulted in some issues with participation. According to Dan, for example, “perhaps someone is feeling uninspired, or unsure [of] how to engage, or [they] don’t see the benefit of coming to meetings or taking on tasks. Sometimes people are just busy. We’ve discussed requiring a minimum time commitment, but I think the consensus right now is that we prefer to minimize compulsion.”[9] The financial cost of member non-participation is minimal because members only earn from the co-op when they work through/for the co-op, but it can contribute to quorum issues, make labor planning more difficult, and it can be “a drag on morale. For the most part, members get out of it what they put in.”[10]



Concrete production accounts for 8% of global CO2 emissions. A company called Brimstone develops processes to produce concrete with zero CO2 emissions via industrial electrification and a different feedstock. Interstitial assists with prototype chemical reactor and kiln design.

The barrier to entry for Interstitial may be low, but at its current stage, it is also not necessarily a sustainable single source of income for many of its members, which may contribute to a lack of participation, if members’ capacity is taken up by other, income-producing work. At this stage, the Interstitial workload is fairly light, and engineers must leverage their own networks pretty heavily, consistently apply for requests for proposals (RFPs), or even cold-call potential clients to find work. The group hopes that with time, their network will continue to grow. One member-owner described future problems like determining whether to hire a full time project manager, or other support for internal business development, as problems he’d like to have.

[9] Dan Fourie, via email follow-up after the interview, September 16, 2026.
[10] Dan Fourie, via email follow-up after the interview, September 16, 2026.

In terms of how Interstitial views growth, both in general and for itself as an organization, there is some variety. The horizontal organizational structure, decision-making by consensus, and the drive to make meaningful impact through the work they do all point to degrowth-aligned business strategies. Many of the engineers at Interstitial prefer to work on projects that are for nonprofits, in the public's benefits, or focused on sustainability, and the general clientele often reflects that; many of their projects are rooted in the decarbonization sector. That said, working with small start-ups or larger corporate clients that *are* interested in pursuing traditional types of growth is often what makes room for the team to be able to work on more degrowth-friendly projects. This tension between the members' values and the realities of financial sustainability reflects a reality that rings true for many who work to survive within an economic system dictated by the severe capital accumulation we see throughout the global economy today.

For the make-up of the organization itself, though, growth is not necessarily unwelcome. Both member-owners we talked to mentioned that an increase in workflow would be welcome, especially to a point where Interstitial could offer as much work as its members are looking for. Beyond filling up workload capacity, however, the team doesn't necessarily feel the need to grow in size. Chris Desnoyers, another of the member-owners, explained that:

> "[Growth] is a non-goal. We definitely are trying to grow our business, so that's kind of the balance there [because] the business is in a growth stage, but I don't necessarily feel that the staffing is. So, I would expect that we'll have some more people join over time. But we don't have a goal to become a much larger version of this; just for this [work] to kind of grow to fill the needs that we want it to fill as members."[11]

Ultimately, growth is something that the organization can choose to pursue, or not, depending on its needs and interests, which puts Interstitial in stark contrast to traditional organizations that often require growth in order to survive.

Challenges and opportunities

Flexibility:

Some of the opportunities that the interviewees from Interstitial named as being reasons they joined the organization have also presented challenges. Flexibility of schedule and work-life balance, for example, was a key factor in one of the engineer's decisions to join the group, but that same flexibility that comes with this kind of consulting work also sometimes means inconsistent workload, and a lower level of institutional support for career and business development internally. Paula Te, one of the member-owners, described it as a type of tension:

[11] Chris Desnoyers, from an interview conducted via Zoom on March 21, 2026

> "[One] of the challenges of having so much flexibility for every one of the members is […] thinking about full-time sustainability [of the organization]. We want to be able to have Interstitial be, for example, a co-op that could support all kinds of tech workers from, or all kinds of workers, with all different kinds of needs. And so I think there is a bit of a tension with that flexibility versus, you know, consistently getting work that can pay us a sustainable amount."[12]

Horizontality:

The challenges to such flexibility come in other forms as well: the horizontal organizational model means there is less oversight, and the group has run into at least one challenge where a coworker was inconsistently showing up and fulfilling their obligations, and was eventually asked to leave the cooperative. Even in less extreme cases, finding a quorum for decision-making purposes can be difficult, with engagement ebbing and flowing depending on members' availability. That said, the team feels confident in their ability to troubleshoot issues that come up, and so far has successfully navigated the problems that have arisen.

Timely decision-making:

The importance of the opportunity brought by a fully horizontal, democratic workplace cannot be overstated. It creates a space where each member's voice is consistently heard, thoroughly considered, and holds just as much sway as anyone else's. This, of course, also brings its own challenges, in the form of timely decision-making; consent and consensus-based processes often take longer than majority-based decisionmaking. Additionally, the commitment to democratic organizing has meant going through the process of creating governance processes that work for the group (i.e. deciding on how to decide on things). One strategy is to determine ahead of time what the decision-making mechanisms will be, even if there is not a clear need for them at the time; alternatively, and this is the strategy that Interstitial has opted for, a group can wait to iron out the details of governance until there is a situation that calls for it. The latter option, however, means that there may be times when the group is operating without clear governing guidelines, or under informal or unfinished processes.

Financial sustainability:

Another challenge that Interstitial, among other organizations situated within the complicated mosaic of value-driven programming and economic inertia, faces is the question of staying financially solvent. In order to create space for the meaningful projects that bring in less money, the group has had to bring in some larger clients that do not necessarily align with the organization's values. It's a clear illustration of the real-world trade-offs that value-driven organizations must struggle with in order to exist and thrive within a system not built for their success. In more than just an homage to the degrowth movement, Interstitial Technology illustrates how organizations can use interstitial strategies (i.e. existing alternatives to the dominant logic of capitalism, such as cooperatives) for transformational social change.

[12] Paule Te, from an interview conducted via Zoom on March 21, 2026

Takeaways for entrepreneurs and business owners

Agency and autonomy versus financial realities:

Sometimes there is a tension between an organization's (or its members') values and the clients they need to work with in order to keep the organization running. How can individual autonomy and agency be balanced with necessary constraints that come from keeping a business running? Making tradeoffs is sometimes required in order to survive, but there might also be a limit to what the organization can compromise without losing its identity.

What kinds of tradeoffs is your organization willing to consider, and is there a point at which a compromise asks too much of the organization, or requires straying too far from your mission? How can democratic governance help you navigate this tension and legitimize a controversial decision?

Governance theory versus practice:

Horizontal governance structures are great ways of making sure an organization is moving in a direction that everyone is comfortable with, but it can also delay some decision-making, and make processes more drawn out.

Where is the ideal balance, for your organization, between democratic decision-making structures (i.e. horizontal governance) and the need to sometimes make decisions quickly? Are there ways to implement a horizontal governance structure and still make decisions at the pace needed? What does that look like for your organization?

Tending towards being better *as a disposition* versus meeting the minimum:

It's true that no organization is perfect, and there will always be constraints that raise questions about which areas to improve upon. But in the world of imperfection, there are two ways to be. One way is to throw up your hands and say, "well, if we can't be perfect, we'll just do whatever we're told is the bare minimum to be acceptable." The other is to say, "we may never be perfect, but we can always work to be better." The former is a race to the bottom, one where "how can we do the least amount of work and still check the box?" is the main question. The latter is a race to the top, in which "where can we improve the most with the resources we have" is the mantra instead.

How has your organization viewed improvement in the past? What changes can be made to shift towards a disposition of improvement? What are the red lines we don't want to cross?

The bigger picture

The world of tech typically offers few opportunities for socially- and ecologically-conscious tech-workers seeking to advance their values through their labor. And while some gains in labor conditions can be made by starting or joining a union, the current legal and political landscape can make unionization a long and fruitless endeavor. Alternatively, if you can convince likeminded workers in your industry to create your own organization under a worker-owned Public Benefit Corporation model, collectively living out your values and determining your own working conditions is entirely achievable. This is what Interstitial Tech has accomplished.



Worker-members of Interstitial Tech.

The process of starting a worker-owned tech company is not always easy. For workers who need a more predictable or larger income stream, it may require balancing this form of entrepreneurship with another part-time or full-time job, at least for a while. As a new company entering the market, you and your fellow worker-owners will need to rely heavily on your network, your strategic planning abilities, as well as your marketing skills to gain enough business opportunities to achieve financial stability. But when prospective worker-owners study examples of alternative models that are operating successfully in the real-world, such as Interstitial's, it can catalyze their collective entrepreneurial success and increase the chance of this model proliferating in the tech industry.

Interstitial Tech's example is a testament to the power of innovative collective organizing, and beacon of hope. In the not-too-distant future, tech workers who seek to align their ethics with their time and labor will have more options to choose from when it comes to seeking an employer. And the tech industry will look a lot more like a partner, rather than an adversary, of the living world.