

MAN ON FIRE PRESENTS  
**THE COMBUSTION  
CHRONICLES**

**EPISODE TEN  
ICONIC ADVANTAGE**

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GUEST: SOON YU

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## EPISODE TEN Iconic Advantage WITH SOON YU

Every company in every industry is facing disruption as tastes change, profit margins shrink, and barriers to entry fall for upstart rivals. Soon Yu, former global VP of innovation at VF Corporation, says the key to avoiding obsolescence is to build iconic advantage. No, that doesn't mean designing prettier smartphone icons; it means pursuing a strategy that builds real differentiation and turns your business into a cultural icon. Dig into this week's episode with us as Soon explores the concept of iconic advantage. He gives us a sneak peek at his book of the same name, which challenges businesses to refocus their innovation priorities by building greater iconicity—yes, that's a thing—and establishing timeless distinction and relevance.



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Soon Yu

### THEMES & INSIGHTS

1. Successful innovations place customers into part of a larger story, endowing meaning to the brand and creating an iconic advantage. Often, this involves innovating the old instead of chasing the new.
2. You can be the first to market with new technology and still fail miserably. Being distinct from the competition is not enough. Your innovation needs relevance to your customers and to your brand's positioning.
3. Consider your personal iconic advantage, what you love to do and what you are known for, and focus on those qualities as your key points of differentiation to create a personal brand.

### COMBUSTION QUOTES



"One of the benefits of having people who are innovative is that they're truth seekers. They're really trying to figure out what's true."



"You see at Nike the biggest supporters of this idea of iconic advantage or innovating the old aren't the merchandisers, aren't the product people. It is actually, believe it or not, the supply chain guys, and the CFOs. Because they realize when you're innovating against something that's already proven ... the probability of success is so much higher."



"I think for every success I've had, I've had at least two failures.... I looked at 50 companies that were doing innovation and design differently.... Through this idea of having longevity and owning something that's distinctively relevant, they have become standard-bearers for that distinctive relevance and thereby becoming iconic."

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**Shawn:** Welcome to "The Combustion Chronicles" podcast, where bold leaders combined with big ideas to create game-changing disruption. I'm Shawn Nason, founder of Man on Fire, and your host for "The Combustion Chronicles." Throughout this series, we're bringing together the most unique and influential minds we could find to have honest conversations about not being okay with the status quo, blowing shit up, and working together to influence our shared future. We believe that when bold leaders ignite consumer-centric ideas with passion and grit, the result is an explosion that creates a better world for all of us. I'm here with my co-host Michael Harper, Chief of Radical Experiences at MOFI.

[00:00:44]

**Shawn:** So, on today's episode we're speaking with Soon Yu. Soon is an international speaker, award winning author on innovation and design, and Forbes contributor, who has been featured in "The Wall Street Journal," Washington Post, "Entrepreneur" magazine, and "The New York Times." His book, "Iconic Advantage" challenges businesses to refocus their innovation priorities on building greater iconicity and offers deeper insights on establishing timeless distinction and relevance. He regularly consults business leaders on developing meaningful, iconic signature elements, iconic brand language, signature moments and signature communication. He most recently served as the global VP of innovation and officer at VF Corporation, the parent organization to over 30 global apparel companies. He is a highly sought-after speaker on innovation, design and entrepreneurship and is a teacher at Parsons School of Design. Soon, it's great to have you on.

[00:01:47]

**Soon:** And it's great to be on with you guys. And wow, what an intro. I'm gonna hire you for my PR firm now.

[00:01:53]

**Shawn:** (laughing) We would gladly do it. Like, there's so much just in the bio that we can dig into. So Soon, we're gonna get into this a great conversation today what draws you specifically to the innovation and design space? And what continues to excite you about your work and what inspires you in that space?

[00:02:15]

**Soon:** Sure, sure. Sure. You know, when I think about the idea of innovation and I think you're asking sort of the why? Why innovation? Why design and why the interest in all of that? And I have to kind of look back at sort of first my personality and my proclivities, I guess and I would definitely say that by nature, I am somebody who is always asking, "Why isn't this better? Or why isn't that better? Or wouldn't it be fun to marry that up with that?" And so it's kind of a combination of two things. I would say it's been this curiosity around, why can't we make something a little better than it is, and never being sort of satisfied with that idea of the status quo. And then marrying that sort of curiosity, with the creativity or kookiness, or whatever of saying, "What if I mashed up this idea with that idea? What would happen here?" And sort of being kind of using the analogy of kind of cooking, you know, taking different spices and

different ingredients and mashing them up and seeing what you get to see if you can actually come up with something a little more tasty.

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And when I think of innovation, and I think of design, it really takes advantage of those two things. It really... you know, those who are innovators are always asking, "How might we?" "How might I?" "How might we do A, B, and C, different or better?" And then I think they're really applying the skills of just bridging something they learned here or something that's working over here. And saying, "Might that analogy kind of be applied here?" And seeing what happens. And so yeah, that's kind of why I love both innovation and design. And what aspects... specifically about design, it's not only design of solutions, which I absolutely think is a critical part of innovation. But I've always been a fan of design of aesthetics and design of sort of seamless experiences, or actually not even seamless, sometimes really involved engaging friction, full experiences that leave me out of breath. And I think the idea of design, whether it's to visually feel aesthetic or to shock you or to, from an experiential point of view to leave an impression or just to create a memory. I think that's the aspect of design I really enjoy.

[00:04:33]

**Shawn:** I loved you said, "leave me out of breath." So those experiences, those design elements, and that's powerful. So, in today's world, you're speaking, you've written a book. What continues to inspire you day to day in this space?

[00:04:52]

**Soon:** Yeah, in this space, I think it's really, I look at it especially today. I think it's this idea of the human struggle and then struggles. It's the condition I wouldn't say it's always struggle. Sometimes it's the human triumphs and it's the idea of the human story. And I think innovation is a critical part of it. You know, if we look at something as simple as I don't know travel. You know, originally people, you know, got around in horse and carriages and probably prior to that they were trying to figure out if they could design something that could use wheels. And after the horse and carriage they came up with the Model T and then from the Model T, now we're into, you know, combustion engines that can go 200 miles an hour and, now we have electric cars and then they're gonna be self-driving. And it's like wow. But then what's the impact on society of that? And I was thinking about I like to stay in this idea, stay on the idea of transportation.

[00:05:51]

I am from Taiwan. I grew up there. And when I was growing up, there were really three main cities. There was the northern city, which is Taipei, the middle city, which is Taichung, and then the southern city which is Kaohsiung. And when I was growing up, getting back and forth, there was only one highway and it wasn't so bad when I was young. It was probably, give or take, two or three hours between those cities. And so to go north and south was maybe five or six hours. But then as the population grew and as more and more people were able to purchase cars, and the cars per capita just went over one, right, that commute, especially during the holidays when

people wanted to go visit their families like during like let's say Chinese New Year's. Believe it or not, the average commute between the northern city of Taipei and the southern city of Kaohsiung could take easily over 18 hours, which normally should be like four and a half to five hours. Eighteen hours and people would do it. And that was the only way you could go see your family during Chinese New Year's.

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And then when they actually put in the high-speed rail, life changed dramatically because you could go from north to south in literally two hours flat. And they showed this one picture, it's very Chinese okay. They said, "Before the high-speed rail," they showed a picture of the outside of somebody's house, you know, the simple welcome doormat of course, it's in the Chinese characters, right? And they showed maybe two or three pairs of shoes, because if you know Chinese culture, everyone takes off their shoes before they go inside. Then they showed an after the high-speed rail. And there were literally like two dozen pairs of shoes in the front of the house. And that said it all. It said, "That's what innovation can do." That's what, you know, innovation did in terms of changing people's lives. It could bring families together. It can bring more families together. And I just thought that was such a powerful statement of what innovation can do to people's lives, bringing them together.

[00:07:56]

**Shawn:** Wow. I was actually visualizing that as you were talking about it. That's. that's powerful. You know, recently Soon, you said, "It's not the biggest, fastest or baddest mousetrap that gets the mice. It's the one with the stinkiest cheese." And first off, I absolutely love that. And it's not just because I love cheese, but I do love...

[00:08:20]

**Soon:** (laugh) I love cheese too.

[00:08:21]

**Shawn:** It's because I do love cheese Soon, all types. So, but can you explain to our listeners what you mean by the stinkiest cheese?

[00:08:29]

**Soon:** Sure. So before I do that, I just wanted to tell you go to Whole Foods. They have this truffle cheese. It is to die for Shawn, to die for.

[00:08:39]

**Shawn:** Oh, I'm going as soon as I can.

[00:08:42]

**Soon:** I tell you it's so stinky and so yummy, at the same time, I can't get enough of it. Sorry. I know that's a tangent. Okay, so back to this idea...



[00:08:48]

**Shawn:** I love that soapbox. So, keep...

[00:08:52]

**Soon:** Back to this idea about stinky cheese. I work with a lot of companies and especially a lot of startups. And this really applies to startups. But it also applies to big companies, of course. But let's take it from the mindset of a startup, usually startups they get involved in a new idea. But they're not the only horse in town or the only mousetrap in town, I guess, right? And they're usually in the philosophy, "Well, if I'm the first out, then I'm probably gonna be successful." Or "If I'm the biggest, then I'm probably gonna be the most successful." Or, "If I have the best bells and whistles/ technology/ IP, then I'm gonna be really successful." And I think history is littered with companies that were the first out that quite frankly, the second one kicked their butt. And there are people that were really big but the nimble ones came in and actually out innovated them through business model innovation.

[00:09:44]

And so anyway, that doesn't always actually work, and it doesn't stick very well. So, my whole point there is, it isn't always the one with the best technology or the one that has the most scale or the one that got there first. It's the one that can tell the best story. Because if you can tell the best story of what you're doing and make whatever you're doing seem that much more relevant to the end consumer, end customer, end user, then whatever you're doing is 10x, 100x in terms of the value because you've created a story. And that's what stinkiness is about, great storytelling, okay, around your cheese. And so, to me, that's what stinky cheese is, is having a great story that creates meaning.

[00:10:32]

Let me give you an example of the power of meaning. Humans are such a unique species, we're probably the only species in the entire universe that can create something out of nothing. We can create meaning out of nothing. So, my example is this. You don't see this right now, but I'll help you visualize another thing. Right now, on my desk, I have a Montblanc pen that I got as a gift when I left one of the companies that I worked with. Beautiful, worth a lot of money, traditional white sort of star at the very tip, all that and you can visualize that. But I also have this ratty, tatty big pen that's all chewed up and scratched. And if I asked you which of these two pens are more meaningful? Well, most people are probably gonna say Montblanc. Which one's more iconic? They're probably gonna say the Montblanc. But if I told you the story behind the big pen, if I told you it is exactly 14 years old, that I only use it once a year. And my wife only uses it once a year to write anniversary cards to each other. Because it is the pen that the justice of peace gave us to sign our marriage certificate, because I forgot to bring a pen that day.

[00:11:48]

Now if I asked you, which of these two are more meaningful? What would you say? Obviously, the big pen. Pause for a second here, Shawn. I just made up that entire story. It's not even true okay. **(Shawn laugh)** That's how we create something out of nothing.

[00:12:04]

**Shawn:** That's right.

[00:12:05]

**Soon:** And that's what stinky cheese is. And if you can figure out a way to tell a better story about whatever you're doing, and tell it in a much more stinky way, versus saying, "Whoa, I've got the biggest platform, I've got the fastest platform, I've got the whatever," right? You will win. Because people will remember that, and they'll attach meaning behind it and they will pay for that meaning.

[00:12:27]

**Shawn:** Wow, first off, you know, I'm gonna get you when I see you sometime. And like I was starting to get all emotional and fuzzy inside and imagining and then I found out that it wasn't even real Soon. **(Soon laugh)** Come on.

[00:12:41]

**Soon:** Yeah, I pulled your leg, but you know what? You're gonna get some stinky cheese out of all this.

[00:12:46]

**Shawn:** Oh, that's right. So, let's touch on this concept of "Iconic Advantage" which is also the title of your book. So, listeners, if you haven't got it, go get it. Walk us through this whole concept of "Iconic Advantage."

[00:13:03]

**Soon:** Sure. Now I know you gave me this great intro, but let me just qualify, I think for every success I've had, I've had at least two failures. So, in other words, as long as, my intro was my failure intro would have been at least two to three times longer, right? And I've literally had many, many major failures in my life to the point where I got a credit score of 300 which is the lowest you can get, by the way, and I've actually done it twice in my life. Okay, so I've had bankruptcies, I've had to lay off people, anyway, the whole kit and caboodle okay. And so, there was always this burning curiosity, why have other people been able to commercialize innovation, and new ideas better than I have been able to. And so, I kind of just decided to do some research and I looked at 50 companies that were doing innovation and design differently. And it was these companies that were creating timeless distinction and relevance. Timeless brands. That through this idea of having longevity and owning something that's distinctively relevant they have become standard bearers for that distinctive relevance and thereby becoming iconic.

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And I'm like, wow, was that by accident? Or was it by intent and design? And it is the latter. It is by intent and design. So, then the other question was, okay, how do we reverse engineer that, pull it apart, share it with others, so that they can replicate it? And that is the whole analysis and case study and premise behind iconic advantage is reverse engineering. How do you create a timeless brand that is meaningful to people? And when I looked at these 50 brands that were doing it great like the BMWs of the world, the Burberrys of the world, the Amazons of the world, all these brands that have really managed to create this idea of iconicity, there are three things that they did very well and that they all share in terms of qualities. One was one, having something that made them stand apart from the competition, something distinctive. That was number one. Number two, whatever that distinction was, it wasn't just different for different sake. It was highly relevant distinction, okay.

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And, importantly, it wasn't just relevant distinction, but it was relevant yesterday, it was relevant today, and it was going to be relevant 5 or 10 years from now. It's this idea of creating timeless relevance against that distinction. And then the last quality they had beyond having distinction and timeless relevance was universal recognition for the audience they wanted to be iconic too. And so, if you could have those three things, having universal recognition for that distinctive relevance over time, you will become iconic.

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So, then what the book really looks at is how do you create distinction, timeless relevance and then get recognition from that? And one of the key takeaways there was that most of these brands created signatures, signatures that were embodied through signature elements. I'll give you a couple examples here. So, when you think about going on vacation and having the beer that represents vacation beer, the beer that probably comes to mind is Corona. And their key signature element is having a lime in the neck. They talk about Coronas being naked until they are dressed, with their limes. And every time you see that lime, you could be dead of winter in Toronto in a rooftop soirée and you see that lime in the neck and it brings you to the beach, it brings you to the last vacation you were at. That is a signature element that they continually impress, continually story tell around, and continually innovate against. So that is a signature element.

[00:16:53]

Google, what they were best known for, truthfully, was the barren web interface with the one feature that they did well and did well better than anyone else. And that was search. And if you remember, when Google launched, there was the Excites of the world, the Lycos of the world, the Ask Jeeves, all those other so-called search engines. And when you went on their homepage, it was littered with hyperlinks. And so Google not only played on this idea of the box, they played on their little name, and they have owned search because they continually not only own the signature, but innovate around the meaning the benefits around the idea that that signature delivers which is search.



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So, those are just some examples of great signature elements that really embody your distinctive relevance. And the key is, innovate against those, always have a huge innovation pipeline around your signature element.

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**Michael:** In terms of the refocusing the priorities, what advice do you give people? Because innovation is hard, right? There's lots of things that get in the way of innovation. There's lots of walls that cause us to slow down or stop. But I love the language of refocusing innovation priorities. Because in my mind, I didn't even know there were priorities in innovation.

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**Soon:** Yeah, no, I think that's really important is, one of the benefits having people who are innovative is that they're truth seekers. They're really trying to figure out what's true. What's the new truths? Right, versus...I think, Roger Martin, who is a friend and mentor of mine, and he was a former dean of the Rotman School and I think probably the world's best strategist. He talks about there's two types of people, there's validity people, and then there's reliability people. And 90% of the corporate organizations are filled with reliability people. These are people that they know what works and what their goal is, is to make it work even better. Okay, they focus on reliable outcomes, okay.

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Whereas you and I and Michael we're validity people. We're out there trying to find new truths and trying to validate whether or not they are new truths or whether or not it's true, okay. And the problem with validity people is we're oftentimes faced with the reliability people asking us a question, "Prove it. Prove it." And you can't prove it. Because you don't know the answers. You need to actually go and find out if there's truth there. And so that's what the conundrum is validity people sometimes have a hard time being successful in reliability organizations because we're always being asked to prove it. So understanding that that is the dynamic and needing innovation to be successful, my suggestion is this, what I found and why these people and why those 50 companies I researched were so successful is they kind of reframed the exercise to focus around what people already know to be reliable. And instead of innovating things that are shiny new objects or brand new to the world, instead of innovating that new, they actually innovated the old, okay.

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They took all their great ideas, but where they innovated was different. It's not what they innovated on. They added AI, they added virtual reality, they added, you know, new experiences, they added new materials, whatever it is, okay. But it's the where that was innovated. They innovated against something already proven, against their signature elements, their iconic franchises. And when they did that, two things happened. One if you say to the CFO, "Hey, you know, we've been selling the Nike Air for 30 years, and it's our most profitable brand and we're making XYZ margins. And I wanna invest more money against growing that," your

CFO is gonna go, "Hell yeah." But if you say, "Oh, I'm gonna create this new line. I'm gonna get a new brand, and I'm gonna go after this new segment of people we don't even know about and create this new distribution house" he's gonna be like, "I don't know if that's really what I wanna invest against, " right?"

[00:21:08]

But take all your crazy ideas but apply it against the Nike Air, make that Air the air pocket and the idea of buoyancy and what it represents, and focus all your energy around making that thing even more successful. You see at Nike the biggest supporters of this idea of iconic advantage or innovating the old aren't the merchandisers aren't the product people. It is actually, believe it or not, the supply chain guys, and the CFOs. Because they realize when you're innovating against something that's already proven, it's a lot more successful, the probability of success is so much higher. You already have a built-in consumer base that loves you, you already have a built in retail channel that's willing to take any new crazy idea you have against that. You already have built in loyalty. You already have a supply chain that has all the die cast molds that are required to make whatever it is you're gonna do. And all you're doing is actually growing the volume so you're actually improving the cost. So that's what innovating the old helps you do, is you take all the crazy ideas but where you apply it, you apply it where you've already been successful.

[00:22:18]

**Michael:** So, what about this approach to branding and to innovation. What about how it affects personal brand? You know, I think about young adults trying to get out there and they've got so many amazing ideas trying to do something for the world. The world needs them. I need them. And they've got to cut through all the clutter, right? And never before has personal brand been so important. Not just Linked-In, but having an Instagram presence having who you are and getting out there. How might this factor into just a person's brand?

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**Soon:** Ah, that's a really, deep question, but I'm gonna give you as simple of an answer as I can against this. I do believe the same principles around branding a company, branding a product line, branding a service apply 100% to branding yourself. You can use the same tools. I use a very simple brand pyramid for companies I work with and I have applied the same thing for my son, for a friend's daughter, as they were thinking about, you know, how to position themselves to get into a better high school or a bit better middle school. Yes, believe it or not. And as they think about how they package themselves for college. So, the answer is all the tools apply. Now, here's where I think it's important to think about as a person, what's your signature? Is there something that you're best known for? It doesn't mean you can't be multifaceted. It doesn't mean you're not multi-dimensional. But, is there one or two things that you're totally known for? And it's your key point of difference. And it's something when I think of point of difference it's one, it's something that you have strength in, something you have skill in, attached to this idea of strength of skills. It's something you actually like to do, okay, it's not something you don't like to do.

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**Soon:** So, it's something you're strong at that you like to do. Think of the Venn intersection of three things, that's number one. Number two is it's something that other people appreciate you for. It doesn't mean everybody but there's a segment in the population maybe it's a niche, it's all that's required. That people really appreciate you for that strength that you like to demonstrate. And the third is, it makes you a little bit different than other people. If you can find that intersection of those three, that's a wonderful point of difference to create a signature around.

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And then so, as I tell brands that I work with and businesses I work with, what's your signature, I asked the same thing of people. What's your signature? What's something that you love to do that you're known for that you could do 24 hours a day and no one paid you, you'd still be doing it that you can double down, triple down on that makes it something that people appreciate and also just gives you something to talk about. That just... it might be 20 other people are doing it. But because you're so nerdy about it, you have a different take on it or you just have more depth on it. So, in that sense, I think having your own personal signature is important. I have one caveat on this though, for younger people, I think it's okay, to have a signature, but it's okay if that signature changes over time. Because, hey, you're a growing dynamic, a prototype and you're gonna be trying new things, and they're not always gonna work. And what you thought you might like now, 5 or 10 years from now, you may not. That is okay.

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So as a young person, if your signatures vacillate and change, that's great. Actually, I think it's great to go through life trying to find it. But by the time you hit your 30s you should probably have one or two things that you're best known for that you're doubling and tripling down on. Things you like, not things you don't like. Some people I think fall in the trap of being good at something that they don't actually enjoy. That is the worst trap in the world.

[00:25:59]

**Shawn:** Wow, that's some great stuff. So, I'm gonna ask you one more question that really will put you on the spot. And then we're gonna get into our combustion questions here. But, looking at the landscape across all industries today, Soon, what is one company that you would love to get your hands on and work in this space around this iconic advantage? What, like, is there one that you just go, "Gosh, I wish I could have that."

[00:26:27]

**Soon:** Yeah, there's been a couple that have sort of come to mind. You know, one that's sort of close to home just because I've had the, I guess, pleasure, or whatever of.. or honor of being able to meet the founder of Zoom. And I actually think, you know, Zoom right now obviously is riding high because of the current situation. But I'll be honest with you, I don't know with the competition coming in and a lot of good coming in, building better, bigger, faster, mousetraps,

whether or not they've created the stinkiest cheese. And so there for me, that would be like the easiest win is to help them right now and say, "Look, guys, what is your signature beyond having the most availability?" Okay, because that means you have kind of the biggest mousetrap, right? "How do we create some real stinky cheese for you that really is lasting? How do we create language that is yours only that this becomes something that you've created that you own, that becomes part of the vernacular of describing the routines or the new behaviors that people are adopting? Because that makes you even stickier? And how do you own that?"

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So, I think that would be like kind of a no-brainer. There are other companies that are probably less obvious, and I have to think about that, but that's what I thought about a couple of times. Because a lot of people say, "Oh, yeah, Zoom's gonna be the de facto of course." I don't know. I'll be honest, Microsoft's coming up with some great stuff. You know, Cisco is too. There's a whole bunch of people. WebEx... There's just a ton of people that are gonna be jumping into this space that quite frankly could build better mousetraps, but it's not about mousetraps. It's about stinky cheese.

[00:28:02]

**Shawn:** Love it. Love it. So, we've come to that point in the episode Soon where we've used this amazing algorithm that's personally built in Michael's head.

[00:28:16]

**Soon:** Oh.

[00:28:18]

**Shawn:** Yeah, I'm telling you, it's powerful on the combustion questions. So he's gonna ask you three questions and have a little bit of fun with it. So Michael, take it over.

[00:28:27]

**Michael:** Okay, Soon. Are you ready for your combustion questions?

[00:29:31]

**Soon:** Yeah, this is spontaneous combustion about to happen.

[00:28:34]

**Michael:** Bam. Here we go. Number one. If you could create a new sport, what would it be?

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**Soon:** I think it would be a sport that could be used in the...yeah, the Zoom chat rooms. And so somehow while you're having a meeting, while you're, yeah while you're having a webinar, or whatever it is on Zoom in the background, there could be a game that is happening, that points are being counted that you could win something for, that actually keeps the audience engaged.

And if you're really creative that ties to the topic or the purpose or the meeting objective at hand. I think that would be fun.

[00:29:15]

**Michael:** And then within a few months, it would be commercialized, and we could get sponsorships for it right?

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**Soon:** Well, yeah. Michael, I would say you have the IP for it. You have this trade market and you would get a Bitcoin for every time it's used.

[00:29:26]

**Michael:** Really.

[00:29:29]

**Shawn:** I'm telling you. We heard that first year on "The Combustion Chronicles" where we're claiming that trademark and IP and Soon, we'll come into a joint venture over this.

[00:29:37]

**Soon:** Yeah, we'll call it instead of Zoom, it's Goom. You know, it's a game. I don't know how. **(Shawn and Michael laugh)**

[00:29:42]

**Michael:** All right. Soon, here's question number two. What's the favorite piece of clothing that you've ever owned, ever?

[00:29:51]

**Soon:** Oh, ah, Ever, ever owned?

[00:31:08]

**Michael:** Even from your childhood. Your favorite piece of clothing you've ever had.

[00:30:00]

**Soon:** Okay, one probably brings the best memory. We started a dive team, my senior year, a diving team, right? And quite frankly we all sucked, none of us had grew up diving. We were seniors in college. I wanted to letter in something. I was not big enough to be a football player or tall enough to be a basketball player or just athletic enough to do anything else. And then there was this, hey, opportunity to get a letter by being on the diving team. I'm like "okay, sign me up." And there was a bunch of us that signed up. And we never dove in our whole life. And because we weren't in the culture of diving and swimming, wearing speedos was just... we were very self-conscious, let's just say, okay. You know, and our diving team had an incredible coach that actually got us from 0 to 60 pretty quickly. And so that we ended up at the end of the year being third in sectionals of 12 high schools that competed.

[00:30:58]

That's pretty impressive going from nothing to being third, okay. But our key signature was Bermuda shorts, we dove in Bermuda shorts, and it was a shock to the judges. Because one they said, "How can you actually be nimble and flexible in Bermuda shorts?" And it was just so different that it became our signature, and I still have those pair of Bermuda shorts that I wore that I actually meddled in. And yeah, they're very faded and I can't fit in them anymore. But that is probably my favorite piece of clothing I have.

[00:31:32]

**Michael:** We will look forward to digging out some pictures.

[00:31:35]

**Shawn:** Yes. **(Soon laughs)**

[00:31:40]

**Michael:** Number three. What do you think about throw pillows?

[00:31:43]

**Soon:** I love throw pillows. I don't think you could ever have enough. You know, one you can throw them at people right. Two I have a bad back. And so for me it's such a great support system when I'm sitting on a chair that's just too soft. And three, they come in different sizes, shapes, and colors, and so much variety. What's not to love about a throw pillow?

[00:32:05]

**Michael:** Not much.

[00:32:07]

**Shawn:** Love it. Love it. Well Soon, thank you for sharing with us today in this great conversation. So excited that you were with us and on this episode. And, uh, we look forward to catching up and talking again. So thanks Soon.

[00:32:21]

**Soon:** Thanks, guys. Keep pushing the gospel. With people like you guys sort of getting the word out and being such great proponents, you know, it just makes all of the rest of us that much more inspired. Thank you.

**Shawn:** Thank you so much for listening to this episode of "The Combustion Chronicles." None of this is possible without you the listener. If you'd like to keep the conversation going, look up Man on Fire on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and at manonfire.co. Give us a shout. Let us know what you think. And please, subscribe, rate, and review if you like what we're doing and if you don't do it anyways. And remember, always stay safe and be well.