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Oral History Conversation with Mark Berger

Jack Turner

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ORAL HISTORY CONVERSATIONS WITH CHANGEMAKERS

By Students in PHILOSOPHY 332: Business Ethics | Spring 2018

MARK BERGER
(PARTNERSHIPS WITH INDUSTRY)

Conducted by Carmen Simpson, Jack Turner, Madeleine Ursini, and David Ye

00:00:00.000 --> 00:00:03.010

(Maddie) This is an oral history conversation
on social enterprise

00:00:03.010 --> 00:00:06.480

between students in Business Ethics
at the University of San Diego

00:00:06.490 --> 00:00:12.000

and Mr. Mark Berger, CEO of
Partnerships With Industry or PWI.

00:00:12.000 --> 00:00:18.380

Mark, before we begin the conversation
proper and just by way of an introduction

00:00:18.400 --> 00:00:22.320

to scholars who would be listening to the
record of this conversation, could you

00:00:22.330 --> 00:00:26.760

give us a brief overview of what
Partnerships with Industry does?

00:00:26.770 --> 00:00:29.920

(Mark) PWI, Partnerships with Industry

00:00:29.920 --> 00:00:32.860

is a business, as we describe it with a
nonprofit tax status.

00:00:32.870 --> 00:00:36.540

Our business is bringing together employees, that happen to have

00:00:36.550 --> 00:00:40.490
a disability, and that's only time I'll talk about the word disability;

00:00:40.490 --> 00:00:42.810
I talk about unique abilities, capabilities

00:00:42.820 --> 00:00:45.710
with businesses in the community.

00:00:45.710 --> 00:00:51.600
PWI was founded in 1985, and has helped over 13,000 people with

00:00:51.610 --> 00:00:54.680
various kinds of challenge to being at work, to go to work.

00:00:54.680 --> 00:00:58.410
Today, like any other day 750 people were helped to go to work,

00:00:58.410 --> 00:01:00.600
that happen to have some challenges.

00:01:00.600 --> 00:01:05.560
They work at the grocery store bagging your groceries, at Home Depot,

00:01:05.560 --> 00:01:09.770
we've had people working in the cafeteria here before, in the recycling center.

00:01:11.200 --> 00:01:14.600
Literally all over the community: north, south, east, west

00:01:14.600 --> 00:01:20.140

PWI has offices in Kearny Mesa area,
Mission Valley area, Chula Vista

00:01:20.140 --> 00:01:22.860

and Santee and Oceanside.

00:01:23.230 --> 00:01:25.280

(Jack) So, how many employees?

00:01:25.290 --> 00:01:27.350

The organization has about 124 employees,

00:01:27.350 --> 00:01:29.880

because I'm now officially president emeritus,

00:01:29.880 --> 00:01:32.966

which, with five dollars
can get you a very small latte.

00:01:35.206 --> 00:01:39.040

(Maddie) In an interview article, published in the

00:01:39.040 --> 00:01:42.520

San Diego Union Tribune,
the reporter mentioned

00:01:42.520 --> 00:01:45.240

that your mother worked with
people who were hearing impaired.

00:01:45.240 --> 00:01:48.900

Could you take us back to a specific
incident when you met

00:01:48.910 --> 00:01:51.960

the people your mother had been
working with, and could you

00:01:51.960 --> 00:01:55.620

elaborate on how your mother's
work gave you a perspective of

00:01:55.620 --> 00:01:59.020

what life was like for
people with disabilities?

00:01:59.020 --> 00:02:02.740

(Mark) I can't remember a specific person
or specific time other than

00:02:02.740 --> 00:02:05.250

remembering that she
used to teach my

00:02:05.250 --> 00:02:06.949

sister and I sign language.

00:02:07.269 --> 00:02:10.189

Not that she was hearing impaired
or that we were hearing impaired

00:02:10.209 --> 00:02:13.440

but that if we came across
who was struggling to be able to make

00:02:13.450 --> 00:02:17.330

themselves known or communicate with
somebody they didn't understand at that time

00:02:17.340 --> 00:02:21.070

finger spelling or sign language that
we would least can intervene.

00:02:21.110 --> 00:02:25.450

So I don't remember but it would have to be
I was probably five, six, seven something

00:02:25.450 --> 00:02:30.580

like that and always stuck with me.

I can't do it very well.

00:02:30.600 --> 00:02:35.150

But it kind of dawned on me when
I came into this job thirteen years ago

00:02:35.150 --> 00:02:42.830

as a CEO, that, I had met people like that
which PWI serves every day and it seemed

00:02:42.830 --> 00:02:46.340

like it was the right place; quite different
from the other work I've done before.

00:02:48.730 --> 00:02:52.870

(David) Would you say that these experiences
are what led you toward non-profit work?

00:02:52.870 --> 00:02:58.310

If so, if not, could you share some other experiences
that led you toward the non-profit world?

00:02:59.520 --> 00:03:03.460

(Mark) You know I grew up in a federal
government family household in D.C.

00:03:03.700 --> 00:03:08.140

Which is sort of in the realm of,
not business, but not nonprofit, either.

00:03:10.550 --> 00:03:13.090

You know, I always was a person of compassion

00:03:13.110 --> 00:03:15.830

and concern about
individuals that whose rights were not

00:03:15.830 --> 00:03:20.540

being dealt with appropriately.
My parents always made me aware of that.

00:03:22.200 --> 00:03:25.950

And it just seemed like an appropriate thing to do. I had studied sociology

00:03:25.950 --> 00:03:28.580

and psychology as an undergrad

00:03:28.610 --> 00:03:34.000

and social work in graduate school and my interest was really not in

00:03:34.000 --> 00:03:38.100

direct client work but with organizational change.

00:03:38.440 --> 00:03:42.930

(Jack) So I know you worked on both sides of the country, are there any main

00:03:42.930 --> 00:03:49.520

differences that you feel exist between how the community in general view

00:03:50.890 --> 00:03:54.280

people with abilities, as you say?

00:03:54.520 --> 00:03:59.120

I can't say that necessarily, there are

00:03:59.120 --> 00:04:01.580

differences in life, pace, and style between the

00:04:01.580 --> 00:04:05.090

East and the West Coast and I have never lived in the Midwest so I can't really say

00:04:05.090 --> 00:04:08.740

but observations of visiting and conferences and friends there

00:04:08.930 --> 00:04:15.330

I'd say that you know the pace of day to day life in New York, in Boston, in D.C.

00:04:15.350 --> 00:04:18.080

is a much faster one.

I think we have a greater

00:04:18.080 --> 00:04:21.220

appreciation in the West Coast especially in Southern California

00:04:21.260 --> 00:04:25.040

of, you know, the quality of life being important both during

00:04:25.040 --> 00:04:28.900

the work day, after the work day, a good balance between;

00:04:28.900 --> 00:04:32.740

I see a lot of organizations that I work with over time, on the West Coast

00:04:32.740 --> 00:04:35.750

much more concerned about the balance between work and family

00:04:35.760 --> 00:04:40.880

and working outside and I see that more and more with all my younger employees.

00:04:42.910 --> 00:04:46.700

(Carmen) Is that something that you emphasized, when you were CEO at PWI?

00:04:46.700 --> 00:04:48.770

That balance between work and life?

00:04:48.770 --> 00:04:50.580

Absolutely, absolutely.

00:04:59.060 --> 00:05:02.230

(Jack) Before, I kind of touched on you
on the east coast a little bit,

00:05:02.230 --> 00:05:06.540

you were with the Council of
Jewish Federations for some

00:05:06.540 --> 00:05:08.370

time, almost twenty years?

00:05:08.690 --> 00:05:10.990

(Mark) Yeah, over a period of time.
19 years.

00:05:11.300 --> 00:05:14.460

(Jack) Could you tell us more about the community
service projects you worked on while you

00:05:14.460 --> 00:05:18.300

were there and those shaped some of
the values that you now have brought

00:05:18.300 --> 00:05:21.860

to PWI and brought to San Diego?

00:05:21.860 --> 00:05:26.020

(Mark) Sure, as you probably know what
the United Way is,

00:05:26.020 --> 00:05:30.410

the Jewish Federation is pretty much an
equivalent kind of organization and I very

00:05:30.420 --> 00:05:35.090

quickly moved from operations inside
Pittsburgh and then coming out here as

00:05:35.100 --> 00:05:39.660

a COO, to working for the national organization, and being responsible for

00:05:39.670 --> 00:05:43.550

the western states organizations, each independent, but part of

00:05:43.550 --> 00:05:48.240

a national entity. And in that role I got to deal with things like disaster relief,

00:05:49.120 --> 00:05:53.490

that I didn't see that so much unless I happen to live in

00:05:53.500 --> 00:05:57.550

a community where there's an issue. I travel to and you know wasn't usually

00:05:57.560 --> 00:06:01.510

a first responder, but I was usually pretty much in domestic settings:

00:06:01.520 --> 00:06:04.510

of floods, and weather related things like that, for about

00:06:04.510 --> 00:06:07.280

a two year period of time. I was in a secondary kind of role.

00:06:07.280 --> 00:06:11.340

And our organization was part of a national body of volunteer organizations

00:06:11.340 --> 00:06:15.790

like Red Cross, Salvation Army, the Mennonite Church,

00:06:15.790 --> 00:06:20.450

Just a huge number of entities that I had no idea, just as they probably had no idea that

00:06:20.490 --> 00:06:24.730

you know my organization, did that, you know provided relief to individuals and if

00:06:24.740 --> 00:06:27.950

you know recognition that if there was an issue somewhere, in the east, in the

00:06:27.960 --> 00:06:32.340

Midwest in Haiti or wherever, I thought it was our responsibility to respond to it.

00:06:33.470 --> 00:06:38.270

So that I think you know, it kind of shapes some, you know, unique aspects of

00:06:38.280 --> 00:06:41.030

of the work I've done.

00:06:42.410 --> 00:06:45.700

(Jack) Could you give us;
I mean you briefly touched on

00:06:45.700 --> 00:06:48.730

some of the disaster relief that you worked on. Could you give us, maybe,

00:06:48.730 --> 00:06:53.420

some memorable stories that strike you, that are especially impactful

00:06:53.420 --> 00:06:54.960

in your time?

00:06:56.790 --> 00:06:59.800

I remember my supervisor,

we always remember

00:06:59.800 --> 00:07:03.690

these things about our supervisors
so I'll say that individual asking me

00:07:03.690 --> 00:07:07.100

at the end of my responsibilities for
a couple of years of doing that

00:07:07.100 --> 00:07:12.430

"Which was the worst?"
And you know I think he didn't

00:07:12.440 --> 00:07:15.970

get perhaps or I didn't explain to him
well enough over the years, that

00:07:15.970 --> 00:07:19.790

it wasn't what was the worst it was what
we responded to best and that you know

00:07:19.790 --> 00:07:22.270

we have no control over the weather,
you have no control over quakes

00:07:22.270 --> 00:07:25.460

we have no control over hurricanes,
and tornadoes.

00:07:25.460 --> 00:07:29.420

But the mark of a community, of a
character of an organization is how it

00:07:29.420 --> 00:07:31.750

responds- to something far away,

00:07:31.750 --> 00:07:35.920

knowing that potentially it might you know
need the same thing happening in their own

00:07:35.930 --> 00:07:41.700

community or not at all. But that you know, nobody is isolated. And I think that's you

00:07:41.710 --> 00:07:45.740

know part of what, you know PWI, the same kind of message that individuals

00:07:45.740 --> 00:07:49.590

that have trouble finding jobs because of various challenges to their abilities.

00:07:50.390 --> 00:07:54.300

Be it intellectual, be it developmental disabilities, physical disabilities,

00:07:54.300 --> 00:07:59.960

hearing, visual, traumatic brain injuries due to an accident.

00:07:59.960 --> 00:08:02.900

All of them really, you know, need an opportunity and it's

00:08:02.900 --> 00:08:07.940

same kind of thing. I remember one situation back in Santa Barbara, remember

00:08:07.980 --> 00:08:14.100

several fires back there was, before your times perhaps, even. I remember that one

00:08:14.110 --> 00:08:18.580

thing we did was provide relief to individuals that were struggling with how do

00:08:18.590 --> 00:08:22.310

they deal with after the fire their house didn't burn down. But suddenly, you know

00:08:22.320 --> 00:08:25.900

they were faced with other kinds of challenges.
I remember one individual was piano

00:08:25.910 --> 00:08:32.069

teacher and wherever she taught was
burnt down, it wasn't her home but her way

00:08:32.069 --> 00:08:34.150

of making a living was gone.

00:08:34.190 --> 00:08:36.539

And that was not in the
realm of kinds of things that you know

00:08:36.539 --> 00:08:40.610

was in our, activity list of what
we could deal with, but we found

00:08:40.620 --> 00:08:43.890

a way to deal with it, because she wasn't
going to be employable she was going to

00:08:43.900 --> 00:08:48.070

have an income unless she had a piano. So
you know the community was able to find

00:08:48.080 --> 00:08:52.700

a way to make that happen and you know the
ability I think to find ways you know

00:08:52.710 --> 00:08:57.180

outside the box is part of you know what
communities respond what's really what

00:08:57.190 --> 00:09:02.930

community means is that it's not just simply
one way, it's going back back and forth.

00:09:03.730 --> 00:09:09.670

(Jack) So it's sort of, creativity in a group-think sense, or a supportive sense?

00:09:10.590 --> 00:09:13.380

Mm-hmm, right you know I can remember the

00:09:13.380 --> 00:09:18.640

L.A. Quakes then you know really hit them bad we didn't hit us down here and going through

00:09:18.650 --> 00:09:22.520

buildings in the West Valley. You know I had

00:09:22.540 --> 00:09:25.930

a helmet you know I knew that I never really been in

00:09:25.950 --> 00:09:29.470

a really bad quake before; been dumb enough to be walking around the building

00:09:29.480 --> 00:09:32.880

inspectors and buildings that you know were going to get red X's on them.

00:09:32.880 --> 00:09:37.520

But knowing that you know you have to do that and sometimes to really

00:09:37.520 --> 00:09:43.030

understand what that kind of work means is to put on the helmet, to be there.

00:09:46.270 --> 00:09:48.760

(Carmen) I know you were talking a little bit with David about the topics in our

00:09:48.765 --> 00:09:53.445

Business Ethics class. So, in class we've learned that successful social

00:09:53.450 --> 00:09:59.470

enterprises change the features of an existing

00:10:03.090 --> 00:10:07.120

To what extent does PWI exemplify with the kinds of programs and services it offers

00:10:07.120 --> 00:10:10.120

and how does its mission and operating model differ from other organizations

00:10:10.160 --> 00:10:12.690

and government sponsored programs?

00:10:12.800 --> 00:10:19.710

(Mark) PWI Is one of the first organizations in the state to have placed individuals with

00:10:19.710 --> 00:10:26.140

various kinds of developmental disabilities (DD's) with jobs in the community and

00:10:26.150 --> 00:10:29.800

that started back in 1985 actually some young folks like

00:10:29.810 --> 00:10:33.750

you who finished college were working their first job at another agency here in

00:10:33.760 --> 00:10:38.540

town. And they would go to their supervisor and they say in college they taught us

00:10:38.790 --> 00:10:43.070

that the right thing to do the appropriate

thing to do the model for behavior was

00:10:43.080 --> 00:10:45.920

to find jobs for people in the
community that happen to have

00:10:45.930 --> 00:10:49.810

a developmental disability or an intellectual
disability and not that they only had

00:10:50.120 --> 00:10:55.600

to be in a workshop. Shelter workshops is what they
were called at that time and it's kind of

00:10:55.610 --> 00:10:59.830

a polite pat on the head. Go away little
girls, you know where the buses here

00:11:00.040 --> 00:11:05.510

probably was guys. And they simply said
"this is ridiculous," folks should have

00:11:05.520 --> 00:11:06.150

a chance to have

00:11:06.160 --> 00:11:10.100

a job out in the community. They've seen models
of it in college it's seen in other

00:11:10.110 --> 00:11:13.880

communities, so they did what lots of
entrepreneurs are sometime to do in

00:11:13.890 --> 00:11:17.710

a social setting; they started
a nonprofit. They started

00:11:17.720 --> 00:11:18.920

a corporation which then became

00:11:18.930 --> 00:11:24.740

a nonprofit, started in Oceanside and in the first year they had placed forty

00:11:24.750 --> 00:11:28.880

individuals coming out of special ed programs from the Oceanside School District

00:11:28.890 --> 00:11:34.320

It was unheard of. Straight from school districts- that did not ever happen. And it now

00:11:34.330 --> 00:11:35.390

is, has been a model for

00:11:35.400 --> 00:11:40.240

a long time, but it's, you know, that's one things that PWI has done that made them

00:11:40.250 --> 00:11:45.510

unique and continue to be unique. We've been asked under several different

00:11:45.520 --> 00:11:50.440

authorities, most recently Department of Rehab, to be the model agency for

00:11:50.450 --> 00:11:53.520

a new series of programs that the federal government is funding through the state

00:11:53.530 --> 00:11:58.850

Department of Rehab and we are the model agency for the county. And there's one for

00:11:58.890 --> 00:12:03.140

more US either each district of the Department of Rehab or the county wide areas, whatever

00:12:03.150 --> 00:12:08.080

they are for that district. And, we are the model agency setting up programs that

00:12:08.090 --> 00:12:12.510

will now deal.. With what age did you have your first jobs fifteen sixteen that you

00:12:12.520 --> 00:12:12.620

got

00:12:12.630 --> 00:12:17.570

a paycheck. And you got that paycheck you said what's this FICA stuff, "my check

00:12:17.580 --> 00:12:22.010

is half as I worked all those hours". But you know you were fifteen or sixteen I was

00:12:22.020 --> 00:12:25.980

fifteen or sixteen people with developmental disabilities typically don't get that

00:12:25.990 --> 00:12:31.020

first job many times years years and years later but they certainly don't typically

00:12:31.030 --> 00:12:35.730

happen at fifteen or sixteen so one of the programs that the federal government has

00:12:35.740 --> 00:12:41.780

mandated the state is funding to us is to take kids in special ed programs sixteen

00:12:41.790 --> 00:12:46.850

to twenty and get them out into job settings not that they're going to try out

00:12:46.860 --> 00:12:49.140

a job to be a camera man

or to work at a T.V.

00:12:49.150 --> 00:12:53.680

Station necessarily even if that maybe
they're interested simply to have what's

00:12:53.720 --> 00:12:57.330

a job what's a boss What's
a break mean during

00:12:57.340 --> 00:13:02.340

a job setting so we'll be taking them out
into job settings in the community and

00:13:02.350 --> 00:13:07.770

actually giving them one week experiences
that it's us to see what's to see what IT

00:13:07.780 --> 00:13:11.870

job really means and to prepare them
so that when they do go out for formal

00:13:11.880 --> 00:13:15.080

interviews and opportunities for that they'll
be able to do that we're starting it

00:13:15.090 --> 00:13:15.330

with

00:13:15.340 --> 00:13:19.570

a couple of units of department of rehab
clients and sinew Unified School District.

00:13:19.570 --> 00:13:24.870

And then we'll be growing that as we
have the experience initially first in the

00:13:24.880 --> 00:13:26.540

Mission Valley office of D.R.

00:13:26.650 --> 00:13:29.890

And then throughout the county and then we'll take the experiences that we've

00:13:29.900 --> 00:13:33.760

modeled and share them with the rest of the community throughout the state and

00:13:35.170 --> 00:13:41.270

ultimately throughout the country. So the ultimate goal is to move this model from the local San Diego community to California and then scale up to the United States? because of this law. Right.

00:13:41.270 --> 00:13:46.020

Right. And where we're unique in that it's it wasn't a program that had

00:13:46.030 --> 00:13:48.580

a R.F.P. There was no R.F.P. for it.

00:13:48.590 --> 00:13:52.770

It was simply they came to up and said you're the innovators, you're the ones

00:13:52.790 --> 00:13:58.860

we come to, would you consider doing this? And we usually say why did we say yes so quickly?

00:13:58.860 --> 00:14:04.370

Because there's never enough money but we feel like you know if we can set the

00:14:04.380 --> 00:14:08.670

pace for others, we do that. We're doing that with another program. There's

00:14:08.710 --> 00:14:13.170

a major change that's gone on in the past couple of years in services to people

00:14:13.180 --> 00:14:16.610
with developmental disabilities and I
would imagine in thirty years somebody

00:14:16.620 --> 00:14:20.900
sitting in this room will say those were
really great changes but they're really

00:14:20.910 --> 00:14:26.190
hard to adapt to sometimes.
As a business entity, as

00:14:26.200 --> 00:14:29.470
a nonprofit business entity, we have to
adapt. We have to have money at the end of

00:14:29.480 --> 00:14:32.980
the year. Nonprofit
doesn't mean you don't have

00:14:32.990 --> 00:14:35.200
a profit, just means you don't
have taxes to pay and there's

00:14:35.210 --> 00:14:39.420
a tax status involved. But you have to have
money at the end of year because some

00:14:39.430 --> 00:14:44.240
things you do lose money and some hopefully
make some money or you do fundraising

00:14:44.250 --> 00:14:49.610
or you do social enterprise, which
is why we're here to talk.

00:14:50.790 --> 00:14:56.030
(Jack) Of course money is one of the biggest factors in this operation.
How have you in your tenure at PWI, kind of leapfrogged that issue

00:14:56.210 --> 00:15:07.010
or creatively been able to source funds your operations?
(Mark) Well, thirteen years ago when I

00:15:07.020 --> 00:15:10.900
joined the organization we started series
of strategic plans every year or two

00:15:11.520 --> 00:15:15.630
which is essential for any kind
of organization, business or nonprofit,

00:15:15.850 --> 00:15:20.170
governmental, and we looked at it and
said you know my predecessor had run the

00:15:20.180 --> 00:15:21.950
organization pretty much like

00:15:21.960 --> 00:15:25.030
a government funded agency. The government
gives you money, if the government doesn't

00:15:25.040 --> 00:15:30.120
give you enough money, you just do with
that, you stop serving or you do what

00:15:30.130 --> 00:15:32.800
you have to do. We looked
at it and said that's not

00:15:32.810 --> 00:15:35.660
a model that's going to work for us. We
could see the cuts that were coming over

00:15:35.670 --> 00:15:40.750
various periods of time, changes in focus,
and for us it was what are the other areas?

00:15:41.260 --> 00:15:45.500

We kind of looked at where we were as
a three legged barstool, which is not

00:15:45.510 --> 00:15:46.880
a good place to be. Three legs of

00:15:46.890 --> 00:15:50.490
a bar stool are very uncomfortable but
there is the government funding basically

00:15:50.500 --> 00:15:55.000
Department of Rehab, the Regional Center
Department of Developmental Services. There

00:15:55.010 --> 00:15:55.230
was

00:15:55.270 --> 00:16:01.430
a social enterprise that we do which I'll actually
talk about which is basically a business

00:16:01.440 --> 00:16:05.590
application activity that we do in our
foreign locations involves about two hundred

00:16:05.600 --> 00:16:12.580
fifty people that brings in revenue, and
we were doing fundraising; traditional, you

00:16:12.590 --> 00:16:18.740
know dinners, writing grants. Writing grants
is the most effective for us and

00:16:18.750 --> 00:16:21.470
that was three of the legs of the
stool, but you know if you lean on

00:16:21.480 --> 00:16:26.200
a three legged stool the wrong way you
collapse. So he said we have to figure out

00:16:26.240 --> 00:16:31.030

a fourth, and the fourth as we look at other organizations like ours throughout the

00:16:31.040 --> 00:16:36.010

country was social enterprise, was to say that we have to have some businesses or

00:16:36.020 --> 00:16:40.770

a business that we're doing that provides revenues to us and at the same time

00:16:40.780 --> 00:16:45.140

provides job opportunities that was our other caveat. So that for us

00:16:45.150 --> 00:16:48.650

a social enterprise had to meet all those criteria that people with disabilities

00:16:48.660 --> 00:16:50.380

were being served, there was

00:16:50.390 --> 00:16:55.490

a business profit at the end, and that there would be again kind of those you

00:16:55.500 --> 00:16:56.130

studied B.

00:16:56.140 --> 00:17:00.990

Level corporations notion that those multiple bottom lines are there as well.

00:17:01.000 --> 00:17:04.760

That for us is a given. But so we launched

00:17:04.770 --> 00:17:07.710

a series of enterprises.

We started really with

00:17:07.720 --> 00:17:12.599

a committee of Business Development Committee,
quite different from our board. Our

00:17:12.609 --> 00:17:13.609

board is typically

00:17:13.650 --> 00:17:19.030

you know, financial people and business people
people that really are saying OK here's your

00:17:19.040 --> 00:17:23.109

boundaries here is your mission here's
where you go this is where how far you can

00:17:23.119 --> 00:17:28.150

go. Our business develop committee was
over there or over there and over there

00:17:28.220 --> 00:17:33.770

all the same time and these are really
very very smart people with one of them

00:17:33.780 --> 00:17:34.570

today who's

00:17:34.580 --> 00:17:40.210

a professor of entrepreneurship at SDSU, and others that you know

00:17:40.220 --> 00:17:43.930

were not the people that said let's not
spend the money. They were the ones that

00:17:43.940 --> 00:17:47.690

came in so if we had all the money in the
world or if we had an extra two hundred

00:17:47.700 --> 00:17:49.910

thousand dollars devoted to
this and somebody handed you

00:17:49.920 --> 00:17:53.950
a check tomorrow, what would you do with
it? And we began to explore all those

00:17:53.960 --> 00:17:58.000
options. What were other organizations in the
country doing? What were other folks locally,

00:17:58.010 --> 00:18:01.380
not too many were, but it happened that
this connection that brought us to this

00:18:01.390 --> 00:18:03.410
video was being part of

00:18:03.420 --> 00:18:09.280
a social enterprise alliance here in San
Diego. And a friend of mine was working at

00:18:09.290 --> 00:18:13.230
Planned Parenthood at the time. She was
part of our network and we each were

00:18:13.240 --> 00:18:18.260
bringing ideas and experiences that we were
having as traditional non-profits doing

00:18:18.270 --> 00:18:22.920
business activities, and for us
that meant initially looking at

00:18:22.940 --> 00:18:26.080
a couple of different models that we
thought might work for us and which ones

00:18:26.090 --> 00:18:30.740
matched our comfort levels. Typically

nonprofits are extremely adverse to spending,

00:18:31.240 --> 00:18:36.160

and taking any risk. Any risk. And it was hard enough to get you know

00:18:36.170 --> 00:18:40.570

a board of directors there were many CFO's of corporations saying you know how

00:18:40.580 --> 00:18:44.340

could I face the world of any money were you know to be in when the money to be

00:18:44.350 --> 00:18:48.530

misappropriated or misused or stolen or whatever. But suppose you lost money on

00:18:48.540 --> 00:18:52.880

something; well, these are guys that are in businesses that made risky investments at

00:18:52.890 --> 00:18:59.680

various times. And you have to do that sometimes. So we started with the idea of

00:18:59.900 --> 00:19:03.160

what were some of the needs out in the community that weren't being met that our folks

00:19:03.170 --> 00:19:08.410

can deal with? The first one was individuals with developmental disabilities like

00:19:08.420 --> 00:19:13.990

Autism and Asperger's, particularly at the higher functioning levels, do repetitive tasks

00:19:14.000 --> 00:19:18.450

extremely well, extremely actively, or

accurately, that you and I would have

00:19:18.460 --> 00:19:20.630

a hard time doing. If I put you in front of

00:19:20.640 --> 00:19:24.490

a monitor and I said all day you're going to look at the screen and you're going to

00:19:24.500 --> 00:19:29.200

flip through how each screen looks across various PC, on

00:19:29.210 --> 00:19:35.860

Mac, on Linux machine, various versions of Linux, various models of operating

00:19:35.870 --> 00:19:42.490

systems, various intercoms. So you know what would happen with that? I'd go crazy, but for somebody

00:19:42.490 --> 00:19:43.240

with autism it is

00:19:43.260 --> 00:19:46.990

a very comfortable setting as long as you don't have fluorescents,

00:19:47.030 --> 00:19:52.880

which is often an irritant to them. They hear the buzz differently than we do. And

00:19:53.800 --> 00:19:56.670

you know sometimes the light can be an irritation, so

00:19:56.780 --> 00:20:02.380

a dark room, you know which you know for some people I hate fluorescents, and my

00:20:02.390 --> 00:20:06.800

office has always been you know one set of bars on just because I have to. But

00:20:06.800 --> 00:20:11.700

I found that, you know, if you listen to what their needs are, they could do that

00:20:11.710 --> 00:20:16.580

task better than your typical person. So we began to explore what was going on in

00:20:16.590 --> 00:20:21.780

that realm and Copenhagen was actually the first model, is an individual whose adult

00:20:21.790 --> 00:20:27.590

son was an engineer; computer engineer, but had Asperger's. Who couldn't concentrate

00:20:27.600 --> 00:20:27.660

in

00:20:27.670 --> 00:20:32.160

a traditional work setting with lights and noise, even though if you go typically

00:20:32.170 --> 00:20:36.360

into work settings, most work settings even, people are putting their earphones

00:20:36.370 --> 00:20:42.030

on at work. People doing software often are just keyed into what they're doing

00:20:42.040 --> 00:20:47.190

there, and so we looked at their model and said you know this is working for them,

00:20:47.540 --> 00:20:51.040

they've hired people, they've trained
people, they were working actually for

00:20:51.050 --> 00:20:57.790

Microsoft, from Copenhagen, traditionally
with Microsoft in the northwest and then

00:20:57.800 --> 00:21:03.270

SAP is one of the major builders of
enterprise software. They've been actively

00:21:03.280 --> 00:21:06.880

advertising that they're looking for
people with autistic

00:21:06.890 --> 00:21:10.800

disorders. So we looked at that model and said
you know what can we do to make that

00:21:10.810 --> 00:21:11.740

happen? We brought together

00:21:11.750 --> 00:21:16.560

a bunch of people from the various entities
in the community; the software industry,

00:21:17.100 --> 00:21:23.760

UCSD Connect, individuals that were
either doing software testing themselves as

00:21:23.770 --> 00:21:28.050

a business, folks that we knew in that
industry or that my committee knew in that

00:21:28.060 --> 00:21:32.760

industry that had kids with that disorder,
and they knew that this was something

00:21:32.770 --> 00:21:35.440

they were going to confront, so they were

happy to put their time and energy into it.

00:21:36.450 --> 00:21:40.330

We played with that for a while and then another organization actually

00:21:40.340 --> 00:21:45.570

a lot better suited to the task was going to start running with it. We said you know

00:21:45.610 --> 00:21:50.750

if we can collaborate with them why should we try to build software testing modules

00:21:50.760 --> 00:21:55.980

in training when they already had those? So that organization continues to exist.

00:21:56.280 --> 00:21:56.950

P.W.I.

00:21:56.960 --> 00:22:01.380

is anxious to support their graduates because what we do best is place people and

00:22:01.390 --> 00:22:03.700

train people for jobs. They were training people for

00:22:03.710 --> 00:22:09.580

a very unique skill, an activity that wasn't real, it was outside of our comfort zone.

00:22:10.160 --> 00:22:13.220

So we simply was one of things lessons we learned is that not everything is going

00:22:13.230 --> 00:22:14.900

to work, and you're going to go down

00:22:14.910 --> 00:22:18.300

a path and you're going to go this way and you're going to go that way and when you get to the end of the

00:22:18.340 --> 00:22:22.780

hallway you're going to find something that works better for you. So at that one we

00:22:22.780 --> 00:22:26.200

also were struggling because we didn't have enough money. To make something like

00:22:26.210 --> 00:22:29.680

that happen needed probably somewhere in the range of

00:22:29.690 --> 00:22:35.630

a quarter million dollars. That's not a comforting sound for us. P.W.I.

00:22:35.640 --> 00:22:38.640

has now that I'm out of there I hope that they still have

00:22:38.650 --> 00:22:42.080

a million dollars in reserves. But as of three weeks ago we had

00:22:42.090 --> 00:22:46.010

a million dollars in reserves and that's not very much. That's for emergencies and that

00:22:46.020 --> 00:22:47.190

would carry the organization through

00:22:47.200 --> 00:22:51.590

a couple of months if the state stopped writing checks, if the Fed stopped writing

00:22:51.600 --> 00:22:56.660

checks to the state. You have to have that kind of reserve so we couldn't put that at risk.

00:22:57.830 --> 00:23:02.160

But the other organization had some resources that we couldn't get to and we were

00:23:02.170 --> 00:23:07.390

able to raise twenty five, thirty thousand dollars simply say you know it's not the

00:23:07.400 --> 00:23:11.830

right thing for us. So we start looking at other kinds of things at the same time,

00:23:12.350 --> 00:23:18.300

turned a whole bunch of ideas down. For the most part and typically in new business ventures

00:23:18.340 --> 00:23:24.640

and ideas and settings like that is almost always no to most responses. It just isn't

00:23:24.650 --> 00:23:28.780

the right thing, something doesn't mesh. I was at something as I said at UCSD

00:23:28.790 --> 00:23:33.840

Connect today and it's first time I've been to one of their pitches and this is actually

00:23:33.850 --> 00:23:38.910

one where they were so surprised because they brought me because it has an autism

00:23:38.920 --> 00:23:45.250

spectrum perspective to it and the idea they had you know it kind of looked at who

00:23:45.260 --> 00:23:48.830

is going to be Mr. Wonderful from Shark Tank or whatever. There are

00:23:48.840 --> 00:23:51.850

a couple people like that that have to be very bossy about it and there's

00:23:51.860 --> 00:23:57.930

a very structured format, but yet the idea of what they were doing was great. And

00:23:57.980 --> 00:24:01.380

you know I could see that you know they were only looking at this piece where there

00:24:01.500 --> 00:24:05.960

was a market in there, looking at you know children up to young adults and this

00:24:05.970 --> 00:24:10.320

was building software because part of the issue for people with autism and attention

00:24:10.330 --> 00:24:15.960

disorders is that their gaze and focus to stay focused on a person, have

00:24:15.970 --> 00:24:19.780

a conversation that I'm having with David if David were responding or I'm having

00:24:19.790 --> 00:24:26.090

a conversation with you or you. Folks with autism often can't handle that, or you

00:24:26.100 --> 00:24:29.270

can't perceive that that's what they're doing. They may be talking to you but

00:24:29.280 --> 00:24:35.410

they're looking out the window. So this is software that uses electronics to

00:24:35.420 --> 00:24:40.680

match where the eye is and where the gaze is playing video games, which is you know

00:24:40.690 --> 00:24:43.920

certainly wonderful kind of Wack-A-Moley games and things like that so there's no

00:24:43.930 --> 00:24:47.880

mouse or whatever you're just looking at the screen blinking and you know

00:24:47.890 --> 00:24:53.990

ultimately they saw some real changes in behavior as far as gaze capabilities so

00:24:54.030 --> 00:24:56.470

one of questions you know that I saw was

00:24:56.480 --> 00:25:00.870

a greater opportunity than five to nine year olds if they tested with and I think

00:25:00.880 --> 00:25:01.790

for adults it would make

00:25:01.800 --> 00:25:07.090

a difference as well and you know so I think they're always ideas out there and

00:25:07.100 --> 00:25:10.360

it's trying to be at the right place at the right time. I'll tell you

00:25:10.370 --> 00:25:14.710

a story about an idea that didn't work because I think you know if your business

00:25:14.720 --> 00:25:17.560

students you know that about eighty percent of new businesses fail in the first

00:25:17.570 --> 00:25:22.050

year or two and we didn't fail in the first year or two we failed the first three

00:25:22.060 --> 00:25:23.800

years and it's

00:25:23.810 --> 00:25:28.580

a tough lesson to talk about but it's I think one of the most important lessons you

00:25:28.590 --> 00:25:33.050

know that can be learned about it. We have looked and one of our employees it come

00:25:33.060 --> 00:25:35.400

from Goodwill in San Diego which is

00:25:35.410 --> 00:25:39.420

a much much bigger organization than ours and uniquely they hired woman as their

00:25:39.430 --> 00:25:41.980

new C.E.O. this this week which is great been

00:25:41.990 --> 00:25:46.250

a long time since you've seen that. And they had

00:25:46.260 --> 00:25:50.660

a document destruction business so they would take bins and they would basically rent it to

00:25:50.670 --> 00:25:53.610

your business, they would then
come in once a week once

00:25:53.620 --> 00:25:58.310
a month take the bin replace it out shred
it and then sell the paper that was

00:25:58.320 --> 00:26:02.690
shredded and recycle that paper so over
series there were three or four or multiple

00:26:02.700 --> 00:26:08.300
streams of revenue coming in so the key was
how do you get customers and how do we

00:26:08.310 --> 00:26:11.160
get to how could we get
through the door here (USD) this is

00:26:11.170 --> 00:26:15.680
a perfect size campus you know for us
to work on if we did it wouldn't be too

00:26:15.690 --> 00:26:20.540
expensive to get you know bins for every
three offices or whatever security of

00:26:20.550 --> 00:26:25.470
paper is important to people they think
that people do go dump in to go into trash

00:26:25.480 --> 00:26:29.190
bins and steal stuff out of it to be
valuable and some things need to be shredded

00:26:29.200 --> 00:26:34.090
on site so we looked at all the factors
we still thought that with two trucks two

00:26:34.100 --> 00:26:38.470

drivers and a salesperson we
could develop we developed

00:26:38.480 --> 00:26:43.230

a pro-forma with my very conservative
board members all the way saying you know

00:26:43.370 --> 00:26:46.720

well if we do this months and months
and months of debate over what was the

00:26:46.730 --> 00:26:52.750

breakeven point. The neat things for us
was it hired we six individuals with

00:26:52.760 --> 00:26:57.510

developmental disabilities those are the
folks that took the paper dumped it in the

00:26:57.520 --> 00:27:03.260

unique thing we did in our model that No one
else has ever done in San Diego was that

00:27:03.270 --> 00:27:05.820

white paper is worth six times a value on

00:27:05.830 --> 00:27:10.400

a typical day in mixed
paper. So if you recycle

00:27:10.470 --> 00:27:12.720

a white sheet of paper
with ink on it it's worth

00:27:12.730 --> 00:27:19.060

a lot more than that one (pointing at folder) is also valuable
but you know the blue folder mixed in

00:27:19.070 --> 00:27:22.110

with all the other colors unless you sort

out so we sorted out the white paper from

00:27:22.120 --> 00:27:27.010

all the others are folks can do that kind
of repetitive task and others did the

00:27:27.020 --> 00:27:32.310

task of carefully methodically putting
the paper through here to the next step.

00:27:33.300 --> 00:27:34.970

Shredding it then it goes up a bin

00:27:34.980 --> 00:27:40.240

a drops down an alley since two thousand
on pallets and the biggest challenge we

00:27:40.250 --> 00:27:44.180

faced was the clients who were doing it
they were doing it safely we never had an

00:27:44.190 --> 00:27:46.560

accident which was if you
have an accident with

00:27:46.570 --> 00:27:53.100

a shredder it could be the worst never
had any accidents. We had security.

00:27:54.520 --> 00:27:55.870

There's a certification agent there's

00:27:55.880 --> 00:28:00.050

a certification agency for everything but
there is for document destruction as well

00:28:00.120 --> 00:28:03.060

so we started with meeting the standards
the first day we opened even though we

00:28:03.070 --> 00:28:06.130

couldn't get certification
so we had cameras just like

00:28:06.140 --> 00:28:10.990

a casino we had the same rules that people
wore aprons without pockets so that you

00:28:11.000 --> 00:28:11.770

know if you ran across

00:28:11.780 --> 00:28:16.860

a credit card you couldn't grab it or it
would be unlikely and they'd be aware that

00:28:16.870 --> 00:28:18.550

you know so when they
walked out just like in

00:28:18.560 --> 00:28:23.540

a casino you do something like to show that
your hands up your sleeves we did that

00:28:23.550 --> 00:28:27.900

as well and we were very careful to make
sure that none of the paper got out of the

00:28:27.910 --> 00:28:33.190

room that was done in so that you know it
was an environmental hazard. All those

00:28:33.200 --> 00:28:36.360

things were going great except the side
of bringing in new business and enough

00:28:36.370 --> 00:28:41.680

business the other factor to that happened
was that we were working with one shift

00:28:41.720 --> 00:28:46.460

basically a half shift in the morning out
in our Santee location if you've ever been

00:28:46.470 --> 00:28:52.190
in Santee during the summer it's on lot
warmer than it is over here on campus a lot

00:28:52.200 --> 00:28:56.620
warmer but typical day there is one hundred
one hundred five and that's not the

00:28:56.630 --> 00:29:01.400
kind of room you're going to air condition
so we had large fans swamp coolers are

00:29:01.410 --> 00:29:03.040
called and they did

00:29:03.050 --> 00:29:08.480
a reasonable job but then the rates went
up for SDGE and our usage went up

00:29:08.520 --> 00:29:13.890
so we had SDGE coming to the door
saying you're using too much electricity

00:29:15.390 --> 00:29:16.560
I thought your business was to sell

00:29:16.570 --> 00:29:21.880
us electricity. You have shareholders, why aren't
you wanting to sell us more? We don't

00:29:21.890 --> 00:29:26.120
have the capability to get the product to
you so we'd like you to do is shift at

00:29:26.130 --> 00:29:29.270
night we're not going to do a
shift at night we would do

00:29:29.280 --> 00:29:33.830

a shift you know you do to half shifts
during the day but so we had the factors of

00:29:33.990 --> 00:29:38.320

not getting enough customer base fast enough
when we were getting to that point and

00:29:38.330 --> 00:29:39.110

ready to grow to

00:29:39.120 --> 00:29:44.730

a second shift our electricity supplier said can't give

00:29:44.740 --> 00:29:48.250

you electricity now or if we do is going
to cost you some much it's going to make

00:29:48.260 --> 00:29:53.210

it impossible for you to do business so
even with the battles with them in the good

00:29:53.220 --> 00:29:57.450

relationship we have with SDGE and
they've been good supportive partners from

00:29:57.460 --> 00:30:02.600

their foundation this is something that
you know hurt their core business so we

00:30:02.610 --> 00:30:04.270

ultimately said Social enterprise is

00:30:04.280 --> 00:30:09.640

a great idea if it makes money and it
doesn't make money and it drains on the

00:30:09.650 --> 00:30:14.060

company you have to lay

people off it was not

00:30:14.070 --> 00:30:18.600

a happy feeling and we were able to find
other jobs for the six individuals the job

00:30:18.600 --> 00:30:22.940

coaches our staff that were there everybody
found another job but that sense of we

00:30:22.950 --> 00:30:27.750

had created something from scratch that
we had several hundred bins in various

00:30:27.760 --> 00:30:34.010

locations throughout the community. That
this was you know this was really the

00:30:34.020 --> 00:30:36.760

start of something exciting
which for us was became

00:30:36.770 --> 00:30:42.070

a serious challenge because you know we
lost money in the deal we bought two trucks

00:30:42.080 --> 00:30:43.760

we had to turn one back at

00:30:43.770 --> 00:30:49.370

a much lesser value than we could get
another funny thing happened truck

00:30:49.730 --> 00:30:56.140

regulations change all the times to.
2010 California

00:30:57.160 --> 00:31:01.940

Vehicle for diesel truck standards
changed and you had to pay much more air

00:31:01.950 --> 00:31:03.210

conscious diesel

00:31:03.220 --> 00:31:08.690

kind of engine or you can get relicensed
So you know all the used truck so we

00:31:08.700 --> 00:31:12.190

would have bought that you know or two
thousand and nine and older which is the

00:31:12.200 --> 00:31:16.010

market we were looking at that point we
couldn't use in California all those trucks

00:31:16.020 --> 00:31:18.870

were in Arizona Nevada so we had to buy

00:31:18.880 --> 00:31:23.140

a new truck. And then after people had
bought all their new trucks in the three

00:31:23.150 --> 00:31:27.340

years later there wasn't such a
demand or need for used trucks took

00:31:27.350 --> 00:31:33.480

a bath on that so all those things the
truck the various and sundry things

00:31:34.250 --> 00:31:38.830

taught me that you know I have the best
minds in the room all the time and

00:31:38.900 --> 00:31:42.170

something's likely to go wrong and then
something's likely to go wrong on top of

00:31:42.180 --> 00:31:46.390

that so you get the smartest the best and
the brightest in you ask them all the

00:31:46.400 --> 00:31:49.520

questions you can possibly think of then
you go out to other organizations in the

00:31:49.530 --> 00:31:53.510

community you go out to other communities
because the nice thing is there's no

00:31:53.520 --> 00:31:57.300

place I've ever worked in the nonprofit
sector in forty years where I couldn't go

00:31:57.310 --> 00:32:02.520

to another or does ation either around the
corner or cross the country and say how

00:32:02.530 --> 00:32:07.660

do you do this the same way that you know
people have called us about what we do it

00:32:07.670 --> 00:32:12.610

doesn't matter where they are it
doesn't matter they they're competitors.

00:32:16.340 --> 00:32:20.540

(Jack) So, do you feel like that aspect of social enterprise

00:32:26.550 --> 00:32:31.590

and non-profits is expanding today as technology and communications get better?
Or how have you seen that impact PWI in other ways?

00:32:31.600 --> 00:32:35.740

(Mark) PWI will sustain itself through these
serious government changes that we're facing

00:32:35.750 --> 00:32:40.290

now some of this technology that will

improve continue to improve we've invested

00:32:40.660 --> 00:32:45.510

very heavily that we have good software
magic there's no off the shelf software for

00:32:45.520 --> 00:32:48.620

running our kind of business there
aren't enough of them that are unique in

00:32:48.630 --> 00:32:51.490

California and we're also very proud to be

00:32:51.500 --> 00:32:57.180

a MAC shops we have to have stuff that's
compatible with of Macs and P.C.'s. But

00:32:57.190 --> 00:33:00.160

you know we're willing for example you
know if someone wanted to license our

00:33:00.170 --> 00:33:04.780

software and our application itself you
know we just want to recover the costs

00:33:04.790 --> 00:33:09.370

involved with it. Same way you know if
we went to you and said you had similar

00:33:09.380 --> 00:33:13.630

kinds of software similar kinds of problems
could we lease it, I don't think

00:33:13.640 --> 00:33:14.210

would be much of

00:33:14.220 --> 00:33:18.200

a challenge where I think if we were for
profit it would be you know what's going

00:33:18.210 --> 00:33:22.580

to happen to our bottom line it isn't that I
wouldn't think about that but you know I

00:33:22.590 --> 00:33:25.750

want to make sure that you
know not only are we providing

00:33:25.760 --> 00:33:29.280

a good product but that you know we're going
to be in business they're going to be

00:33:29.290 --> 00:33:31.690

business so I think you know this is

00:33:31.700 --> 00:33:36.800

a different ethic that and you know I
studied business I didn't finish my M.B.A.

00:33:37.170 --> 00:33:41.980

But I know enough to see the difference
that there would be that kind of sense of

00:33:42.220 --> 00:33:46.850

you know what's in it for us first for the
company and then what's in it for the

00:33:46.860 --> 00:33:52.170

rest of the world so those various multi
bottom lines are nice to talk about.

00:33:53.380 --> 00:33:58.090

Nonprofits live them and I think that's
the other you know their tax law

00:33:58.100 --> 00:34:02.450

differences of course and paying taxes not
paying taxes but I think difference is

00:34:02.460 --> 00:34:03.220

really that there's

00:34:03.230 --> 00:34:08.570

a different ethic. We're not in business
to make tons of money for share holders who

00:34:08.580 --> 00:34:12.210

are in business to make money to ensure
that we can provide services to the people

00:34:12.409 --> 00:34:16.610

we determine have needs and that the
government tells us that they can help us

00:34:16.620 --> 00:34:19.469

supply and the ones that the government
says we're not going to give you any more

00:34:19.480 --> 00:34:23.909

money but we're still
going to support them so,

00:34:26.840 --> 00:34:33.520

(David) On that note, with your redirection,

00:34:35.870 --> 00:34:42.810

where do you think you left PWI? In what direction do you see PWI in 5-10 years? Years?
(Mark) So I think it's not realistic to

00:34:42.820 --> 00:34:47.510

think about more than three years I think
if the if nothing else in the not for

00:34:47.520 --> 00:34:51.469

profit sector and probably I think in
the business sector if you think you're

00:34:51.480 --> 00:34:55.760

thinking beyond three years you're for
yourself so we're kind of at the two to

00:34:55.770 --> 00:35:01.610

three year stage. We've seen these major changes in the kinds of services will be

00:35:01.620 --> 00:35:06.430

allowed to offer starting in two thousand and twenty two originally it was going to be

00:35:06.440 --> 00:35:09.480

two thousand and nineteen
Unfortunately the feds stretched out

00:35:09.490 --> 00:35:15.630

a little bit and. It's going to mean certain things that are happening will happen

00:35:16.290 --> 00:35:20.810

one of which is that we've operated programmed we in the entire field have operated

00:35:20.820 --> 00:35:26.710

programs under the sub minimum wage certification. Which are all wondering

00:35:26.720 --> 00:35:30.890

you know what's that mean you're all you know on your job your earning more than

00:35:30.900 --> 00:35:35.010

minimum wage but there are statutes under the fair and Labor Standards Act of

00:35:35.020 --> 00:35:39.790

1938 which created the minimum wage. Up until 1938

00:35:39.800 --> 00:35:44.980

you as an employer could say pay me I'm not paying you there was no mandate

00:35:44.990 --> 00:35:49.110
that said you had to pay somebody you know
if you want to sit there and you know do

00:35:49.120 --> 00:35:54.190
whatever the job was not get paid you
know that was your your decision but the

00:35:54.200 --> 00:35:56.070
minimum wage was established
but there was also

00:35:56.080 --> 00:35:58.580
a sense in Congress that there should be

00:35:58.590 --> 00:36:04.380
a sub minimum wage for people in training
programs with disabilities that will end

00:36:04.390 --> 00:36:09.820
in 2022 so we have
about two hundred forty people right now

00:36:10.240 --> 00:36:15.200
in our assembly facilities across our
four facilities and what they're doing is

00:36:15.210 --> 00:36:21.350
we're working with companies who bring us
product and we do the packaging. I would

00:36:21.370 --> 00:36:22.330
guess there might be

00:36:22.340 --> 00:36:28.390
a few people in the room here that might like beer, like dogs, like beer and dogs.

00:36:29.330 --> 00:36:33.970
You've got a model like that, it's
hard to lose, right? Well, we have

00:36:33.980 --> 00:36:35.980

a business partner they came to P.W.I. called Doggy Beer Bones.

00:36:35.980 --> 00:36:40.400

It's exactly those two factors. I use

00:36:40.410 --> 00:36:46.240

a home brewer, love making beer,
loved his dog and had heard that the

00:36:47.050 --> 00:36:51.510

greens that are leftover after you shred beer,
after you make beer, gets tossed. This is

00:36:51.520 --> 00:36:56.260

a big pile of stuff which ends up in recycling
and it can't really be recycled, it's

00:36:56.270 --> 00:37:01.480

just landfill. But he ran across some recipes
that said dogs love this stuff if you

00:37:01.490 --> 00:37:03.570

basically bake it kind of into

00:37:03.580 --> 00:37:07.850

a dog doesn't care what it looks like but
what it tastes like and I'm sorry I don't

00:37:07.860 --> 00:37:13.660

have any to bring today. It's, not that I tasted it, but it is baked in

00:37:13.670 --> 00:37:19.390

a commercial bakery to human standards and
they have several companies now where he

00:37:19.400 --> 00:37:24.310

goes out in licenses and does the packaging.
so he takes, for example, Stone Brewery,

00:37:24.720 --> 00:37:28.620

the biggest of the home breweries that
grew and became international here in San

00:37:28.630 --> 00:37:32.590

Diego. Stone's Bones, which is

00:37:32.600 --> 00:37:38.160

a great product made with organic eggs, and
we probably all didn't use organic

00:37:38.170 --> 00:37:44.360

eggs this morning for breakfast, and organic
peanut butter, and I still like my

00:37:44.370 --> 00:37:51.340

Skippy and it's not organic. So he's both
his business. He still has his day job but

00:37:51.350 --> 00:37:56.020

he will someday quit that job and we'll
have employees, so what we do right now is

00:37:56.030 --> 00:37:56.270

he has

00:37:56.280 --> 00:38:01.690

his stuff baked offsite, he brings us big
bags of it, our workers in our workshops

00:38:01.840 --> 00:38:06.540

where, you know, gloves and masks they package
it, weigh it out, package should seal

00:38:06.550 --> 00:38:12.210

the bag, and on the back of the new packaging
for Stone Brewery, Stone's Bones in the

00:38:12.220 --> 00:38:15.950

back it says 'packaged by workers with developmental disabilities' at

00:38:16.010 --> 00:38:21.720

Partnerships with Industry. Costs us nothing but, you know, to get that co-branding

00:38:21.730 --> 00:38:25.760

is fantastic for us. That will be on all their products ultimately. We have

00:38:25.770 --> 00:38:29.100

a number of companies that we have done that kind of thing with, where, you know,

00:38:29.450 --> 00:38:33.180

we do their work, they pay us for it. The difference is while the people in our

00:38:33.190 --> 00:38:37.220

workshops are doing it, for Stone's Brewery it doesn't matter as long as they've got

00:38:37.300 --> 00:38:37.560

X

00:38:37.570 --> 00:38:41.530

number that they can get into all their breweries and shops at various times if it

00:38:41.540 --> 00:38:47.190

comes the day of or the day before. So almost its not late. So if there's enough planning, our

00:38:47.200 --> 00:38:51.240

workers are not going to put as many things as quickly sometimes as a worker without

00:38:51.250 --> 00:38:56.550

a disability. So we sometimes can be slower

but we're able to pay based on how many

00:38:56.560 --> 00:38:59.990

widgets or how many Doggy Beer
Bones you put in the bag. So it's

00:39:00.000 --> 00:39:04.570

a sub minimum wage. There are very few
exceptions where that could be done, but ours

00:39:04.580 --> 00:39:09.360

is one of those settings where we have that kind
of licensing. So, you know, we're going to

00:39:09.370 --> 00:39:13.200

see those changes, and that's two hundred
forty people right now two hundred sixty

00:39:13.210 --> 00:39:13.500

five

00:39:13.510 --> 00:39:17.560

a couple months ago. That number will go
down and down because the regulations now

00:39:17.570 --> 00:39:21.690

say that you can't start with somebody
just out of high school. The practical,

00:39:21.700 --> 00:39:25.720

logical place is for them to come
right after high school and go into

00:39:25.730 --> 00:39:30.930

a job like that, because they didn't get that fifteen
or sixteen year old job that you had, so

00:39:31.870 --> 00:39:32.830

that regulation is going to

00:39:32.840 --> 00:39:37.750

change and they won't be able to do this until they've gone out, tried another job,

00:39:38.040 --> 00:39:43.530

failed at it, went to The Department of Rehab, got permission, and then can perhaps enter the

00:39:43.540 --> 00:39:49.730

program. It doesn't make any sense. You know, if you want to prepare them for jobs

00:39:49.740 --> 00:39:54.060

they're going to be successful at, then give them the first skills to do that, give them

00:39:54.070 --> 00:39:58.890

the next skills to do that, give them the next skills. So what's going to happen to them?

00:39:58.890 --> 00:40:04.090

We're going to see fewer and fewer doing that kind of work. Our hope is to put

00:40:04.100 --> 00:40:08.240

incubators into our workshops so that, you know, the guy that comes up with the

00:40:08.250 --> 00:40:14.240

next Doggy Beer Bones idea that you come up with will be able to be your incubator.

00:40:14.250 --> 00:40:17.800

We can rent you the space. You don't have to go out and rent it in the open market.

00:40:18.080 --> 00:40:21.690

We can help you, you know, you can do it in the evenings but someone else can use the

00:40:21.700 --> 00:40:27.250

same space in the morning. So we're hoping that we can do enough of that but we're

00:40:27.260 --> 00:40:31.690

not going to need as much space as we currently have. We recently, in our Mission

00:40:31.700 --> 00:40:35.880

Valley office, we cut from about ten thousand square feet to eight thousand square feet

00:40:36.430 --> 00:40:42.080

and reorganized the space, and we have room for more people. Most of our

00:40:42.090 --> 00:40:44.400

employees are there, yet we have

00:40:44.410 --> 00:40:49.110

less space because we organize in a much more effective way to do that. So you

00:40:49.120 --> 00:40:53.930

know we're going to continue to trim down things like overhead, hopefully pair of

00:40:53.970 --> 00:40:59.630

staff better and better, and more competitively because they deserve it, and to be in

00:40:59.640 --> 00:41:04.290

a place where, you know, we can still support a Doggy Beer Bones and other companies like that.

00:41:06.540 --> 00:41:09.990

We've got another company that we've been working with for several years. The guy is

00:41:09.100 --> 00:41:13.690

a retired marketing guy and his hobby is

00:41:13.820 --> 00:41:18.090

birdwatching, and he couldn't find products that he liked, so he said "well, you know,

00:41:18.100 --> 00:41:19.470

I'll go out and find them use

00:41:19.480 --> 00:41:23.730

a marketing guy. I'll go in and he'll import them, he'll get them distributed in

00:41:23.740 --> 00:41:27.790

a package and whatever". But he discovered that it was starting to fill the second

00:41:27.800 --> 00:41:32.270

bedroom, the guest bedroom, the garage and his wife was not terribly appreciative

00:41:32.280 --> 00:41:36.660

of the whole thing. And he ultimately was looking like many people do when they reach

00:41:36.670 --> 00:41:40.850

a stage: is it a cost effective to rent space and hire people? And he becomes

00:41:40.860 --> 00:41:47.210

a manager, as opposed to, he loves selling and marketing his ideas. Could he do that

00:41:47.220 --> 00:41:50.510

or could he come to a company like PWI? So I think

00:41:50.520 --> 00:41:54.930

a lot of PWI's future market will be working with companies like that, offering

00:41:54.940 --> 00:42:01.880
them space and resources. So...

00:42:01.890 --> 00:42:03.960
they may be, I think in a lot of cases, will be like

00:42:03.970 --> 00:42:07.160
a second company, you know, someone
will have an employer and have

00:42:07.170 --> 00:42:11.900
a second job until they can really create
something like, you know, something that

00:42:12.520 --> 00:42:16.450
becomes sustainable. We're also going to
be changing some of the models. We've had

00:42:16.460 --> 00:42:20.860
people working here, as I said on campus, in the
cafeteria, in the recycling center. They've

00:42:20.870 --> 00:42:22.460
been groups of three individuals with

00:42:22.470 --> 00:42:29.110
a job coach paid based on productivity.
That's going to... we have thirty-some

00:42:29.120 --> 00:42:33.640
groups of three individuals each, of four
individuals each. Largest number is at

00:42:33.640 --> 00:42:34.170
U.C.S.D.

00:42:34.170 --> 00:42:39.170
In the cafeterias we have about thirty people there. That program and it's sub

00:42:39.190 --> 00:42:44.190

minimum wage component will end but
because unemployment is so high now, I

00:42:44.210 --> 00:42:49.120
unemployment employment is so high
unemployment is some. Employers are willing to

00:42:49.130 --> 00:42:50.310
say OK somebody with

00:42:50.320 --> 00:42:55.380
a developmental disability who's going to
run slower works are with you up pay the

00:42:55.390 --> 00:42:59.210
minimum wage will pay more and more the
minimum wage because they're here and they

00:42:59.220 --> 00:43:00.090
can stay and

00:43:00.100 --> 00:43:05.060
a great thing is we can say that people
stay in their jobs that we place on average

00:43:05.070 --> 00:43:09.710
people are placed in jobs directly hired
five years in longer is typically entry

00:43:09.720 --> 00:43:13.660
level jobs so you know that sense
of pride of having a Qualcomm T.

00:43:13.670 --> 00:43:20.150
Shirt or having you know Home Depot orange
vests on those red vests grocery store

00:43:20.590 --> 00:43:23.710
full time job part time
job. You know there's

00:43:23.850 --> 00:43:27.990

a lot of interest in that capability Amazon is building you know brick and mortar

00:43:28.000 --> 00:43:32.040

locations throughout the country we're connected with an organization that has the

00:43:32.050 --> 00:43:36.920

contract with Amazon provide developmentally disabled workers in the facilities in

00:43:36.930 --> 00:43:40.050

their local communities so pretty soon P.W.I.

00:43:40.880 --> 00:43:44.910

Said Piers they were saying in January that Amazon was going to open that part of

00:43:44.920 --> 00:43:50.900

the program they have. National City and car and Carlsbad right now I think so that

00:43:50.910 --> 00:43:51.750

should be P.W.I.

00:43:51.760 --> 00:43:55.490

Workers in those facilities soon and that's part of their business model because

00:43:55.500 --> 00:43:58.980

they know that folks will stay they know at thirteen or fourteen dollars an hour

00:43:58.990 --> 00:44:04.360

they will not keep workers and the general population as readily. So this is going

00:44:04.370 --> 00:44:08.250
to be a new opportunity because of
where the economy is so I think M.P.W.

00:44:08.260 --> 00:44:12.870
I will be adjusting to that people that
stay I'm not have and are able to do

00:44:12.880 --> 00:44:19.320
something five years from now it will
have done that or they'll be gone.

00:44:19.380 --> 00:44:25.440
(Jack) Alright so we just have a couple of minutes left. To wrap up,
I personally want to know...

00:44:19.380 --> 00:44:25.440
Alright so just we got a couple of minutes left.
But to wrap up, I personally want to know...

00:44:28.280 --> 00:44:30.285
what have you learned

00:44:30.285 --> 00:44:32.290
from working with these people with
disabilities or unique abilities?

00:44:36.470 --> 00:44:41.200
You know I think that they're the hardest
workers, you know, you asked how many

00:44:41.210 --> 00:44:44.670
workers we had or how many employees.
We have one hundred twenty five employees, seven

00:44:44.680 --> 00:44:49.090
hundred fifty additional workers that we help to go to work. They work harder.

00:44:49.720 --> 00:44:54.300
And we have great employees but these

guys work harder. They're more passionate

00:44:54.310 --> 00:44:58.320

about what they do and my folks are
incredibly passionate about their work.

00:45:01.930 --> 00:45:02.120

There's

00:45:02.130 --> 00:45:07.870

a gentleman who is my age, not retired yet,
because he got his first job at fifty-five.

00:45:07.880 --> 00:45:14.720

He had never worked and never
went to school, came from Arkansas, the

00:45:15.200 --> 00:45:19.590

School District grew up in didn't see any
need for him to go to school, so he always

00:45:19.600 --> 00:45:22.680

said he always learned everything
from his family and T.V.

00:45:22.680 --> 00:45:28.800

And he still knows every soap opera, what's
going on with it, what hour, or whatever

00:45:28.920 --> 00:45:35.130

but he comes to work every day. And he came
to PWI at age fifty-five, and he is going

00:45:35.140 --> 00:45:38.930

to be sixty-eight soon and you
know he's only been working

00:45:38.940 --> 00:45:43.230

a few years. So, I was over
at the office I've been gone

00:45:43.240 --> 00:45:45.310

a couple weeks now and I've
decided I need to keep

00:45:45.320 --> 00:45:49.270

a distance, its good for my successor, it's
good, probably most importantly, for the

00:45:49.280 --> 00:45:55.290

clients because they see me and they get
distracted but you know he's still working

00:45:55.300 --> 00:46:02.050

just as hard. He sets an example. You
know if everybody did as much as he did

00:46:02.210 --> 00:46:06.270

starting whenever they
started. He's just been

00:46:06.280 --> 00:46:09.210

a phenomenal worker. You know,
whether it's my CFO

00:46:09.820 --> 00:46:15.160

or him, they said great pace and opportunity for people.

00:46:15.630 --> 00:46:21.840

Thank you for having this conversation with us.

00:46:22.670 --> 00:46:26.360

It was great to hear about...I hope you come visit sometime.

00:46:29.680 --> 00:46:34.350

That's what I was just thinking.

00:46:37.720 --> 00:46:40.750

Very good, my pleasure.

— End of Transcription —