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Oral History Conversation with Ryan Sisson

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OK so I guess this is where we actually start our all history conversation with you.

To begin I just want to say that you for being with us here today You're welcome.

So the first question or first thing.

Is just wondering if you could give us a little bit of background on Moniker group. Give us like a brief overview of Moniker Group and what social impacts it's used to achieve for those are doing this. Yeah totally So Moniker.

group exists as eight different companies at this point mark

a group being the parent company founded that about eight years ago and serve as
00:00:49.640 --> 00:00:51.830
a C.E.O. We have

00:00:52.210 --> 00:00:58.700
a layer of four core subsidiaries and then additional single purpose entities live

00:00:58.710 --> 00:01:05.489
under that's so 8 businesses in total we do real estate activation

00:01:05.500 --> 00:01:11.620
focus on retail, food and beverage we do design so commercial interior design and

00:01:11.660 --> 00:01:18.140
fabrication so we design and build office retail food and beverage

00:01:18.180 --> 00:01:24.600
restaurant style hotel style interiors and then we have an event company so we do event

00:01:24.610 --> 00:01:30.850
design event management and venue management and so

00:01:30.950 --> 00:01:35.090
altogether we also have additional brands basically have

00:01:35.100 --> 00:01:39.080
a Co-working space so we manage in Liberty Station and we have

00:01:39.090 --> 00:01:45.190
a retail store as well down there so. Collectively we are
a bunch of businesses each one of them has kind of really grown out of relationships so everything that we've done over time has been based off of the people that are part of it and so I have different business partners on that on the kind of the subsidiary level each one of them with a focus in a specific area and our goal with moniker I'm not within that context is really to create an ecosystem that can empower other people's streams and ideas and push them forward and so the group really acts as like the hub or the heart and so key vital infrastructure lives within that So it's like human resources operations finance marketing P.R. But it also holds the values of the company so our core values live in group and
then they are represented through these different businesses that are attached to it. So that's kind of how the company works were about eight years old were right around fifty employees. All based here in San Diego right now.

And our. From a social mission standpoint you know we don't necessarily come out front and say like we're a social impact business but we all believe in the value that business has in relation to how it benefits people and so our focus is really split in half we focus inside the walls or a company outside the walls so inside the walls or a company we asked a question of how do we create a space where individuals will be engaged in personal growth for as long as they're
part of the company so it's really that question of like how do we. Who is someone when they were who was a person when they walked in the company and when they walked out and we have a responsibility and an opportunity to invest in those individuals to the best of our abilities so that when they leave because everyone will leave the company at some point whether it's retirement or quitting or getting fired or whatever or maybe something in between really being able to look back and go that my time there had a positive impact on my life it was empowering it was inspiring it was equipping whatever it may be and we want that to be the answer for all of our employees so I have
a whole system that we've started and I'm developing on that side of how we develop

00:04:07.360 --> 00:04:10.480
our employees don’t matter whether at whether you’re a barista or you’re

00:04:10.490 --> 00:04:14.470
a vice president it doesn’t matter we want to make sure that you’re engaged at

00:04:14.480 --> 00:04:18.829
a certain level in your development. Outside the walls of the company it’s how do we

00:04:18.839 --> 00:04:24.140
have the able osting impact on our community so what we feel that looks like first

00:04:24.150 --> 00:04:29.480
off is like creating great spaces for people. You know we created our retail store

00:04:29.520 --> 00:04:30.530
which has a coffee shop and

00:04:30.540 --> 00:04:34.850
a cocktail bar in it and we were really looking at how to really use a space as

00:04:34.860 --> 00:04:39.640
a hub for the immediate and like adjacent community how do we care spot where

00:04:39.650 --> 00:04:43.820
people come and gather where they meet someone for the first time or where they

00:04:43.920 --> 00:04:49.270
develop an idea or they work on their their
dream like within our space and that

impact that that space has to empower that with and out of our, like outside the

walls community if you will. So it's definitely in those spaces our co-working space

our warehouse are you know event venues all those have a have

a play and then we also do

a lot of kind of community based events that we are there run or like support. So

whether that like we do you know every other month we do like

a ticketed dinner on our back patio or general words has

a forty person dinner table and you buy like tickets for a seated many and I'm

a seated dinner with

a set menu and drinks and stuff and and you're sitting next to someone that you've
likely never met but because of the way that we created that space, it’s basically saying talk to this person. Versus if you go to a restaurant you’re you’re very isolated you’re very much like the it’s like how much space I get between the you know the person. So like we are creating and set in that table, pun intended, but for people to connect and for people to come together for people to meet. Because of then the day our legacy is going to be in the people that are impacted not in the spaces that we created because those will come and go. But the individuals lives that we impacted will be our legacy as a business So means that moniker public with Its use in part each of those did you start. As well or how did all 8 come about
so I was involved in starting
all of them yeah so I started

00:06:26.440 --&gt; 00:06:32.940
a group ran independently for about six
years and we had to we had this kind of

00:06:32.950 --&gt; 00:06:39.660
event revenue like stream and we had
this design revenue stream and

00:06:40.520 --&gt; 00:06:44.400
I was talking to another friend about some
new concepts mainly the moniker general and

00:06:44.710 --&gt; 00:06:49.990
what real estate will look like under
moniker and so when it we were about to add

00:06:50.030 --&gt; 00:06:53.140
that it really started make sense to
like split the company into independent

00:06:53.150 --&gt; 00:06:58.520
buckets so that they can be vertically
integrated businesses that are completely

00:06:58.530 --&gt; 00:07:04.950
standalone but complimentary to each other.
So we operate really as one team we

00:07:04.960 --&gt; 00:07:08.020
actually literally operate
as one team. We started

00:07:08.480 --&gt; 00:07:11.850
another business that sits outside the
entire group that actually all of our

00:07:11.860 --&gt; 00:07:16.870
staff work for and we did that so that we can have streamlined systems within our

H.R.

side where everyone is they work for the same company instead of getting multiple paychecks if they touch different companies or have to have all these different payroll systems everything. So were we literally and legally work for the same team but also fundamentally we do in how we really collaborate and support each other.

You know we have one we’re building our new office right now it’s centralized office everyone will be in there so we have a retail person in our bar manager and our designers and our shop manager for fabricators our event people and our operations will be under one roof and so just really, really creating this kind of just
a collected kind of palette of individuals and different skill sets that they have,

all working within what they’re best at but being a part of

a larger team and helping each other the better at what they do. So that’s kind of

the way that we built in the way of those business came together was through

relationships and just having key individuals so. Cody who is my partner Moniker

design was our first employee and he came on as

a part time contractor six years ago and we really built design together and then

we spun it out and we became partners Aly’s my partner moniker event was our venue

manager at the warehouse for like two years and doing supporting another company

and as part of her side job and we just started talking what if we just started
our own piece of Moniker events and so we partnered together on that and Nate's

partner on the real estate side and that was just

a little more traditional where it's like we both had it we had an idea that we wanted to collaborate on and we started that way so. That's really how we begin to structure and look at it in the perspective we have it was really it was always my intention to get there. You know moniker just means name it literally like is identity less if you look at all of our logos we have this line on them.

And the line kind of represents like you feeling like your dream your vision your project your goal and and we're here to help support that and drive that forward

and so. When about four or five years into running moniker
and I was running it on the side to I had a full time job somewhere else as I called it

a jobby it's like

a job hobby like really an expression of like what I was passionate about but it

was and we had staff we had. At our peak we had six full time staff before I was even an employee's I was like technically the seventh employee the company. Because

it was really about how do I empower other people because if I was going to go and work program then I was going to take my biggest hit is going to have to carry

a larger weight with just me than it would be if I had to multiple people into power

and really kind of build like this kind of wider company rather than

a deeper company and I was sitting in the airport like four years ago getting ready to head to
Nashville and just kind of what is this thing right this jobby it's like growing and
becoming something and really just felt like there was
a there's clarity around like what the vision of it would be and I began to write
down that what that would look like and
a lot of that what it is now came from that moment which was really empowered by
Virgin Group and Richard Branson and what he has created with his brand he's got
and he's created hundreds of companies under that one brand and has used that
mission that ethos that brand the values on those pieces to be able to burst
all these things out of it and kind of looked at it and said not, I want to build the
next Virgin Group but if they can do it and we can do it and so that was really
where like
a lot of permission came to be able empower
that vision which led to the structure

and everything that we have now. So
this goes back to something you said in your first question

earlier so in an article with Viewpoint Magazine you said
"I'm not trying to create anything,
just the best version of San Diego. So
I was wondering if you'd like to expand.

on what's the best version of San Diego looks like to you and what inspired that aspiration. that's

a good question so when I was born and
raised in San Diego I've been here my entire life,

third generation. You're hard pressed to
find some that love San Diego more than me.

I cried when the Chargers
lost the Super Bowl I had

cried a little bit when they left for Los
Angeles. But just love this community

and in my I went to college here and
after post college I started to lose
a lot of friends to other cities. Mainly creative industry friends that were going to Brooklyn or L.A.
or San Francisco or Nashville or Austin or Boulder and like feeling like they had to leave San Diego and in order to be successful at what they’re doing. And after I kind of processed through you know be offended like they left me personally even though they didn’t but that’s what I feel about my city it’s like when some of these I’m like you’re leaving me but. I just begun to think about like why are those cities where they are and why aren’t we there and and so I kind of begin to see our community as a palette and it is very well known for beaches and sunshine which isn’t the worst thing to be known for but there’s so much
more to our city that individuals don’t know about and I and I related our inability to keep those people here with the fact that the narrative of our community is not being told properly. The stories of those that are innovating that are creative that are making happen or not no one knows about them it wasn’t that they weren’t here it’s just that no one knew that. they were. Everyone knew you know, that we do biotech and everyone knew the military here never knew that this The sun is out like three hundred sixty four days a year but the other parts are aren’t there and so it began a kind of inspiring me like how do we you know elevate our community in a way that people begin to recognize it for those pieces that aren’t yet seen and if we had that I think people would stay
here or come here to be doing the things

00:13:36.820 --> 00:13:39.840
that they're leaving to go do and if
you're familiar with the book The Tipping

00:13:39.850 --> 00:13:44.280
Point or not you should read it but it's
Malcolm Gladwell and it's an incredible

00:13:44.290 --> 00:13:47.160
book and he talks about
what is required to create

00:13:47.170 --> 00:13:53.040
a movement. And there's three really key
individuals there's the connectors which

00:13:53.050 --> 00:13:56.190
are the ones and the people I know everybody
there's the mavens which are like the

00:13:56.230 --> 00:14:00.320
smart ones and the salesman and we have
plenty connected we mean we're big city

00:14:00.330 --> 00:14:00.470
like

00:14:00.650 --> 00:14:06.370
a large city in America or not irrelevant
you know we have got many mavens here with

00:14:06.380 --> 00:14:09.670
that are very talented and very knowledgeable
but the salesmen of the ones that

00:14:09.680 --> 00:14:13.340
give other people permission to do the thing
that they want to do anyways. And it's
salesman as someone who's bought the hat
that you thought you wanted and you saw it

on them are you're like I could talk to pull it off
because that person has it. And so the

idea if for me was how do we create space
that has that the salesmen are coming to

go to the surface if you will so the
others are going oh that person's doing

fashion in San Diego and you go I could be for I mean
so I could do fashion any other person

is doing design graphic design in San Diego
or that I can do that there and I could

have all these other benefits the community
provides. And so you know when I look at

our city and I think about and I talk
about that like I don’t want us to be the

next Austin I don’t want to be the next
Portland I don’t want us to be the next San Francisco or

Silicon Valley it's like those places that
are them like allow them to be them you
know the same way that I don’t want to be the next anybody else but I want to be the best solution of myself and who I was created to be and what I was called to do and so I really that’s really my kind of motivation behind that statement was I how do we just position San Diego with the unique individuals that we have and the unique location that we’re in and with the unique knowledge base we have so that it just is elevated to the best version of itself and so for us we’re just trying to create those types of spaces and opportunities for that to come together. If you want to ask that question it relates more than just jumping up and then. We were checking out your website and we saw that you call Moniker a "Dream Factory" we were wondering if you could elaborate on that concept in relation to your approach to developing real estate
and be able to share some stories that illustrate how that translates to the experiences of your customers. Yeah. To that very deep question. Yeah the dream factory actually thing was kind of a little bit of like a fun element that was thrown out about moniker at the genesis of the company because we never really planned to start a business and so it was more of like it was so fun if we just did something that like helped those dreams come alive or come to fruition and when when at the very beginning we saw the company's been around for eight years about seven years I think it timelines correct we had the monitor warehouse. So we leased the building in 2011 with the vision to have a space in the community which we could do our own events because we were doing
like fashion shows art shows fundraisers
like just stuff that brought people

00:16:50.640 --> 00:16:52.590
together but also created

00:16:52.600 --> 00:16:58.070
a home for others in our
community to really be in

00:16:58.080 --> 00:17:02.040
a sub community you know and be connected
to other people that are pursuing their
dreams really comes down to. And it's the
little fluffy You know I mean I think

00:17:02.050 --> 00:17:05.910
dreams is thrown out

00:17:05.920 --> 00:17:06.650
a lot but the reality is that's like
what we do. And so the warehouse was

00:17:06.660 --> 00:17:13.589
originally sixty five hundred square
feet and we expanded twice and eighteen

00:17:13.599 --> 00:17:16.800
thousand square feet and one point had
about twenty two different tenants that

00:17:16.810 --> 00:17:21.660
were all pretty much like three person
businesses and under. It was like the guy was

00:17:21.670 --> 00:17:26.170
Bradley Mountain who moved out of their
garage in Ocean Beach and moved into our
place to do manufacturing their bags. It's David's Heart foundation that started out as a nonprofit in someone else's studio move in our space and has like four offices and a full recording studio and now. It's well over a church that you know came in was like twenty people or now they have two services and three hundred people and you know we didn't invest in them we didn't incubate them we literally just created a space for them and and connected with them on a personal level. And had great conversations and fun conversations are hard conversations we help them when things are rough and we celebrated with them when things were great. And did kind of whatever we could to support their dreams and that's really where the dream factory where the that physical environment kind
of met the ethos like the heart of our
compny together whereas like we’re we’re
creating
a physical space for your dream to come
alive and we’re going to do whatever we can
as an individual to help your dream come
alive. And so that’s really kind of how it
came to be and then was kind of fun is,
the dream factory kind of slogan if you
will has outgrown physical spaces you know
it was the warehouse but now when you
look at how where monikers gone we do have
a lot of physical spaces but. Really
like you look at our company as
a whole and how it’s been able to partner
with Cody and empower him and empower
Nate power Ally and empower all these
others individuals and the pursuit of what
they want to be doing and what their dreams are and that's really that's really how

00:19:04.520 --> 00:19:08.770
it's best represented so we kind of pull it in from like a more like

00:19:08.780 --> 00:19:11.510
a marketing communications side in different places you know if you go to

00:19:11.660 --> 00:19:17.220
a coffee shop or password for wifi is just dream factory you know and just. Yeah you

00:19:17.230 --> 00:19:21.820
could but it's you that's free it's just everybody but us yeah it's just kind of

00:19:21.830 --> 00:19:27.520
like pull it in and my hope is that it's not like out front all the time we don't

00:19:27.560 --> 00:19:31.950
preach it our hope is that when you see it or experience it on the wall or on like

00:19:31.960 --> 00:19:33.070
a little you know under

00:19:33.080 --> 00:19:38.460
a logo somewhere on our website or you learn what our Wifi password is like our hope

00:19:38.470 --> 00:19:45.020
is that it clicks something like Oh yeah that's what this is about so thats really how

00:19:45.620 --> 00:19:49.900
that piece kind of came to be and how it's
kind of ingrained in who we are as a company

00:19:51.530 --> 00:19:51.790
you know.

00:19:59.100 --> 00:20:06.100
We did some research on some similar companies like We Work which is just a global network of workspaces for companies and people to come together

00:20:06.100 --> 00:20:12.300
and grow together in spaces. And on your website it says Moniker also wants to create spaces where fellow dreamers can connect

00:20:12.300 --> 00:20:15.680
and have discussions about how they impact the community

00:20:19.140 --> 00:20:23.720
What are some of those segments that make Moniker different.

00:20:23.720 --> 00:20:28.730
Yeah I mean We Work you know

00:20:28.740 --> 00:20:34.690
their, they have been very impactful in the co-working space and their valuations now are

00:20:34.700 --> 00:20:38.610
just like obnoxious and like twenty billion dollars something you know they're

00:20:38.620 --> 00:20:39.460
positioning for

00:20:39.470 --> 00:20:46.460
a large you know going public and you know I think, very financially driven.

00:20:47.920 --> 00:20:51.790
You know we’ve collaborated with them on some stuff and we very familiar with their
00:20:51.800 --> 00:20:53.540
work and I think that their presence in

00:20:53.540 --> 00:20:57.070
a community is very validating for that
community I think it's really important to

00:20:57.080 --> 00:20:57.560
have

00:20:57.900 --> 00:21:04.570
a we work it to the kind of says like
you. You have the individuals the

00:21:04.580 --> 00:21:09.200
startup ecosystem or the creative ecosystem
the small businesses ecosystem that can

00:21:09.210 --> 00:21:14.300
support our presence there. But I found
that you know they have to they have to

00:21:14.310 --> 00:21:14.970
exist on such

00:21:14.980 --> 00:21:20.820
a level it's to high level at places that
we don't even think about that doesn't

00:21:20.830 --> 00:21:24.180
really allow them as much to be like in
the weeds in the fabric of the community.

00:21:25.200 --> 00:21:26.690
And they're also being such

00:21:26.700 --> 00:21:32.490
a big brand instantly we have that like
kind of separation from the community you
know even if they throw an event it's still just doesn't naturally initially feel as authentic, regardless of their approaches just because of the magnitude of the brand. For us I mean we are in the community on a daily basis and in those that's who we build and create spaces for it's who we are talking to our messaging it's who we're making coffee for and asking how to ask people how their day is you know on and really our hope is that. And really not just hope I mean this is honestly like probably the most. Rewarding validation is when someone comes and goes I love what you create here and they're not talking about the design. You know as a real estate developer that from Chicago and he's talked with us about collaborating
on some projects and he offices
out of our co-working space and gets coffee all
the time across the street at our shop and
he's like I want you guys to do what you
did here on my project and not just from
a design standpoint is like I want to feel
feels when I walk in the space and for
us I think that is like such an incredible
validation of what we stand for what
we're trying to do. I mean we intentionally
hire the way that we do and staff the
way that we do so that people feel like
they're included because they feel like
they're welcome to feel like someone cares
you know our co-working spaces we're
technically like where we're all are not
a very big space but we have two full time
employees we could easily manage it with
less than one base of our size but we wanted
to because we wanted everyone to feel

like they’re connected we wanted everyone to be greeted and we wanted everyone to

feel like that there’s someone that knows who they are and has their best interests

in mind and so our focus isn’t financially where it’s how do we get the biggest

margins all the margins and finances are very much part of what we do we have

investors in with risk in return but we’re much more focused on what we’re creating

with the finances being an outflow that being

a result of it versus That being the driver and trying to make decisions

financially that kind of benefit the community that really can benefit the bottom line so. I’m not sure that totally answers your question but that’s kind of that’s

kind of the way that we approach it.
What kind of metrics do you use to assess how well you are accomplishing your goals?

Internally we have an annual culture survey that we send out to our staff so it's similar to like what Gallup does with their Q twelve, like employee surveys we have a list about twenty questions that we put together that can be answered in different ways whether the multiple choice or whether they're just like kind of numeric and we're measuring a plain engagement and satisfaction and then we give them fields to be able to provide feedback and then we take that in and we and we analyze it and we make decisions on like our company workspace up of what individuals are looking for so that's kind of like what holistically that
the entire company is able to do that.

as management and owners were trying to respond to what they need for them as individuals but also successful like being successful in their role similar to what we do in our annual review process each person is required to do

a self evaluation and then they're their direct report we'll do an evaluation and you sit down and know basis and go through that and really it's not just like metrics like your sales numbers here or you know you doing this many turns just minutes from customers it's like what are your goals and all of all the goals that are set within our company or we've come into goals so they're measurable and time
oriented. And so really establishing
those with the key and it with all the

individuals in the campaign again either
whether you're a barista or whether your

the vice president. So internally we use
that as like how we measure whether or not

we're being successful within, the impact
within our team is you know if we if

we do

a year every year analysis of whether
or not someone would like recommend

Working next to a friend which
is like one of our questions like

a zero to ten. I don't know if we were
eight and then we start to slow down to go
down towards five we can definitely go
for or missing something here so that's

a way that we can do that and then being
able to track the goals of individuals on
like even a more like micro level is the way we do that. From

a community impact standpoint and it's we don't have necessarily metrics that

we're looking at. As much is really seeing kind of like more from

a business standpoint of like how many customers are doing you know many people are

going to their door our numbers growing on our in our co-working space you know

and and it's

a little bit more implied we're just like you know if you come into our coffee shop

and there's never

a space to sit, that's probably because people really want to be there not just because

they know what the free wifi I like the wifi

password is you know. And you know if we're out of offices and private desks are
co-working spaces for people to be there and if you look at it if you look at like

correction specifically the number one reason people join co-working space is because

community and so if we have

a full face the you can make the assumption that those people are there because

they want to be

a part of the community that we help create and so that allows us to really measure

that and it's it's feedback from individuals you know whether its our landlords or whether be

a business partners or whether the community or whether it be the opportunity to

sit and talk to you guys I mean quite honestly like my word from you would be

a metric that we're doing something right to be reached out to by USD
To come and share my story here you know and. So those are kind of the ways that we do that. Like from measuring standpoint. so when we’re talking about We Work and were talking about We Work being financially driven how do you then balance in Moniker, creating a culture that you want to see how to do it how do you like balance creating the culture that you want and still can be a financially capable company. You know at what point you go too much into creating to the scene returns or is. There a point is defined point for that because you can’t get this is open and there’s no culture that’s going to exist it think it’s the way that you value and approach money right if you approach money as the goal then you’ll be financially driven you’ll make decisions that will allow you that will really be
about maximizing their
returns. If you approach money as
a tool then it becomes something that you’re
using to create the thing that you’re
really supposed to be doing which is for
our partner community so the tool for us
like so if you’re an
investor we have to give you
a set return in order for you to empower
us to do what we do so the the money isn’t
the goal the money is
a tool that we’re able to use in order
for the investor to continue to want to be
behind us. You know it is
a very real very day to day part of our
company as we are not. This isn’t like
super fluffy like oh are just here to like
have impact and like whatever happens
happens it’s like no I’ve got cash flows
for every single company we’ve got pro

forma as we’ve got all kinds of different
modeling we’ve got budgets we measure

tons of stuff we measure percentage points
of our cost of goods sold like we get
down in the weeds and really really find
ways that we can maximize our return

financially but again it’s not what
drives us if as long as we’re efficient
effective in that area we can continue to
do offset that we want to be doing. But

it is a balance because you can definitely get
too far on one side right you can get
too focused on the money side even if
you’re all about culture and just get like

why you know they’d be you could be so
much cheaper if we just had less staff but

then you’re losing the opportunity to
influence and really create the uniqueness of
the space that’s the other thing to
you know for it’s a little bit of

00:30:06.600 --> 00:30:09.620
a theory at this point because we’re
so still relatively young but.

00:30:14.130 --> 00:30:18.260
A lot of companies look at employees as
commodity rights like I want to bring you

00:30:18.270 --> 00:30:19.940
in I’m going to give you

00:30:19.950 --> 00:30:24.020
a list to do if I burn you out then I’ll
ship you out and I’ll ship

00:30:24.030 --> 00:30:26.110
somebody else in and that’s

00:30:26.120 --> 00:30:32.150
a really easy way to manage people and
it’s you can get the most out of people as

00:30:32.160 --> 00:30:33.990
fast as possible but
you’re not going to get

00:30:34.400 --> 00:30:39.430
a long term use out of them. My thought
is what if we created a company of

00:30:39.440 --> 00:30:44.600
individuals that were fully engaged in
what they’re doing it takes way more time

00:30:44.740 --> 00:30:51.540
it's a lot more work because people are hard
because we're humans. But long term if we
have this company of fully engaged fully empowered individuals. My theory is we can go farther and wider than most businesses out there not to mention the legacy piece of just having individuals that were positive impact by being a part of a company so it's that you know idea of empowering investing people in that way takes a lot of resources upfront but then you have a team of healthy individuals that take less time because they are able to go out and be effective in what it is that they're doing and so it allows us to be a high accountability low control type business which means you have a lot less overhead so I don't have
a lot of managers. And which means that we can take those resources and put them back into

projects and expand so I think everything’s connected it really depends on what the emphasis is and that’s just how we choose to do it and you know finances are very real we’ve got to pay the bills we’re going to pay rent we’ve got to pay our employees you can’t pretend like it doesn’t exist but you cannot make it everything right. Reason. You know so I guess ties into what we were talking about

Like your background like looking at your LinkedIn, you went from like a junior estimator to like

Moniker Groups so are there any stand out challenges you faced either personally or growing as a group and how did you go about those. More challenges that I could ever even take the time
to tell you guys I mean there's daily challenge is to be quite honest with you.

The requirements that it takes to be able to hopefully run a company well as it is really endless and there's so many variables and factors when you have people involved you know it's you just don't know what's going to happen with them and their life and their role in the company that they're part of so. There's definitely a challenge as you know I when I talk about what it took to create Moniker I kind of started out where I'm like it's like twenty five percent hard work fifty percent faith and twenty five percent pure ignorance you know like that to a lot of a lot of it like we just didn't know that we couldn't or could like no one told us
we didn’t tell us how we can do it we just tried it. And really just believe that we are capable of figuring out. You know the faith piece for me and and my personal faith is a huge element of that and so empowering to really face the challenges that we have and feeling like this is when it’s just me doing what I need to get through those. But I mean there’s. The amount of times that we’ve been down to like single digit dollars in bank accounts or the now times that we have gotten a check on the day we needed it. Are more than I could even tell you along the way I mean it’s it’s an amazing feat to be able to keep a business alive and we the eight of them and and it’s not just on me is it's
a team effort but you know.
I mean I think there's

00:34:08.650 --> 00:34:12.480
so many things I just now beginning financial
challenges and making sure that we

00:34:12.489 --> 00:34:15.580
have all we need and figuring out like
where those things are come from you know

00:34:16.040 --> 00:34:21.960
when I was an employee like checks just
paychecks just showed up and I just missed

00:34:21.969 --> 00:34:23.210
out of work and I'm like it's just

00:34:23.219 --> 00:34:27.710
a paycheck and never thought about like
what this paycheck really come from and the

00:34:27.719 --> 00:34:31.969
fact that there's somebody somewhere who's
the end of the line that is carrying the

00:34:31.980 --> 00:34:37.489
weight of that pain we have to have what
we need people you know and so that those

00:34:37.500 --> 00:34:42.880
dynamics. Staffing stuff finding the
right people especially early on and

00:34:42.889 --> 00:34:47.239
navigating the fact that like someone who
might have been great for you to start

00:34:47.280 --> 00:34:48.500
was not a great person
00:34:48.540 --> 00:34:55.290
a longevity person and having to
really figure that out and make

00:34:55.300 --> 00:35:00.970
changes there even if the relational
connections were super deep. That was

00:35:00.980 --> 00:35:07.300
definitely challenging. Finding You know
investors and getting all that stuff done

00:35:07.310 --> 00:35:08.130
in time to build

00:35:08.140 --> 00:35:12.490
a closer deals have needed to do taking
care of clients and make sure that they're

00:35:12.500 --> 00:35:16.890
OK. Starting from scratch which you
have no idea you know you like I got

00:35:16.900 --> 00:35:18.400
a business plan together
but I've never started

00:35:18.410 --> 00:35:22.030
a coffee shop store cocktail bar so and
there's no books on it is much as I google

00:35:22.040 --> 00:35:26.700
it just doesn’t that business plan is an
existing somewhere so these numbers

00:35:26.710 --> 00:35:30.700
out and then we're going to build it and
we'll see if we came close and some things
we're in it we nailed and some things we were completely off on and then those lead into challenges of having to kind of adjust on the fly you know just building the airplane here so. Yeah I mean I think that's you know I got. You know looking back it my career path and where how I got here. You know I I was in the real estate world prior to 2008 a real estate development side actually what McMillan who's the company that built Liberty Station. And I got laid off in the recession with like ninety percent of people who work in real estate and I've definitely had a seasonal life as like what what am I going to do I don't know that I don't know what I like to do let alone the fact that no one is hiring right now and.
And so I spent some time doing nonprofit work overseas periodically helping my mom’s
business and I just went out and had a friend that had
a digital small marketing agency I just, can I come work for free basically like intern for
you I just need to be doing something and learning something and that led into
working there full time which led to the job after that which was ended up being me
upping run. Digital agency that actually focused on social impact businesses.

And I did that for five years which empowered me to do Moniker on the side.

And. You know all those pieces and those like you know failures or
You know getting laid off in the middle of the worst recession in one hundred
years was the very thing that navigated me towards the start.
So one of the things that we talked about. On your first confidence and courage and

00:37:25.040 --> 00:37:31.260
then kind of talked about a lot of challenges and stuff so

00:37:33.160 --> 00:37:38.050
Where do you think you got your confidence and courage
to deal with some of those challenges and

00:37:38.060 --> 00:37:41.330
not see the end of it. You talked a little bit

00:37:47.190 --> 00:37:50.680
on your faith like the vast majority
of that confidence encourages knowing

00:37:50.690 --> 00:37:55.080
this isn't just me doing and. You know we
all have different rings and beliefs and

00:37:55.090 --> 00:37:59.610
areas that for me like that is like the
core conviction of everything that I do and

00:37:59.830 --> 00:38:05.780
feel like the reason why I'm here. And
so that is like my like rock but.

00:38:07.200 --> 00:38:11.410
Outside of that it's the people that I
work with and there are teams like I just

00:38:11.420 --> 00:38:16.510
trust that we can figure it out like we
have none of us or I would say what you

00:38:16.620 --> 00:38:20.760
what the world we consider like business
geniuses and then we have no Harvard
M.B.A.’s we don’t have you know people who started you know

a billion dollar startups and sold them and started like five which have

a bunch of people that are really smart and really hard working. And I just trust that we can do it you know I mean if you really break it down it’s

most of what we do isn’t rocket science. You know if you focus on how do I create a great experience for a person the results of that tend to be how what a cup of coffee looks like or what

a design looks like or what your operating hours look like you know all these pieces come out of that that kind of driver of like how do I create something that people want. And I just believe in the team that we have I believe in my business
partners I believe that. You know they're willing and capable to take the risks that are necessary and also put the work in that's necessary to be able to figure out how to do it and I trust them and you know we have a very we are one hundred percent trust with our employees is a person you have to earn. Trust not be interested versus your way around and because of that there's this a confidence and sometimes ignorance like I mentioned that we just go do anything we want to do and just in the fundamentals of business are very similar across the board you know it's not like accounting and human resources and those have things changed so it's like we have a foundation and I believe in that foundation
I believe in how we built it. And so

now it's cool like how do we
stack the sticks on top of it to look

a certain way. So for sure the fav piece
is just like the majority of it but then I

mean it would be nowhere without the team
that we have and without the knowledge

trust and believe in who they are and
what their capable of doing. And then

for times sake that we have the last question
I know on your website it says Moniker creates an environment for others to connect

be inspired, grow, and take action towards their dreams,

So i see how Moniker helps people grow their ideas but on top of that and assisting their vision along the way

how do you personally see Moniker Group growing within the next five to ten years?

yes great question

I definitely see us having a presence outside of San diego

You know we've been to
a good few different cities with the intention of possibly expanding some element

of what we do we kind of intentionally built this kind of variety of projects so

that we can be of value in different ways you know but for us when we go to a kind

da different community it's not about like

hey Monikers here and we're so cool and like we're going to do what we do because it's cool and you guys just watch. It's like go meet with the local visionaries talk to

them about what they're doing let them know what it is that we can offer and if

they say cool We'd love to have really good coffee or we can do that and but if

they're like No we're good we have this and be like you're awesome We're going to

cheer you on and we're going to move on to
a community that needs us you know for us
San Diego’s our home and we get to be the

local visionary and so I don’t feel like
we have to ask permission but outside the city

it’s it’s not us. So I think that as
we grow outside of San Diego that is
definitely part of it is going to other
communities that are trying to be the best
version of themselves and saying this is
what we had to offer is there anything
that we can do to help. So that’s
part of it. You know there’s.

I’ve got

a lot of ideas and because of the way that
moniker structured it literally can we
can do anything and I kind
of joke that we could be

a biotech company founder right
scientist you know it’s it’s like it’s

a little I mean I there I’m passionate about
some stuff that we're looking at

getting into that would kind of feel unrelated to what we've done but moniker

has

a structure and brand that can be adaptable to so many different things so that's

that's part of it. And so and then what's cool about that is it's every time we open another one of those doors we get them power more individuals and their passion about what they're dreaming about and then I would love to start a capital venture side of the company where we can physically like invest in people's ideas that's definitely on our radar we've been kind of working through

what that could look like just from a more of like a dreaming side if you will. But definitely would love to get behind financially
people and and really. Help them get to where they want to go and just be a part of that story you know we don’t need to be we don’t need to have a name in it I just would love to be a part of as many stories as we can be a part of that are about other people getting one because if they were called to do you have like you know. Favors or the like have a story that or you know someone’s dream is part of helping them through. Thats a good question Honestly besides mine I mean that not from a selfish standpoint not from like that you go to school but like so unique and so for grateful that I get to not only do what it is that
I'm most passionate about but that thing
the results in other people are part of

people's stories. One of my favorite ones
to tell, there's two individuals

different companies at the warehouse one
of them is Dave's heart foundations of

this guy Brandon started it and he serves
at risk and homeless youth through sound

ing engineering and video production and
brings them out like out of shelters and

brings them into the
warehouse and gives them

a place to not be homeless
and just even if it's for

a few hours and or he'll you work with
like monarchs who are at risk kids within

the schools and if they get can get good grades
they get extra studio time and these cute

kid to come in and like record albums
and like make videos and they're just
super amped and like Brandon
is team are just

00:44:40.450 --> 00:44:45.370
The most like loving people I’ve ever met
and you know here’s Brandon who had like

00:44:45.410 --> 00:44:49.280
didn’t have his own space and now he’s got
all this space there and it’s just like

00:44:49.290 --> 00:44:52.930
a continued like stream
of kids that he’s gets to bring in

00:44:52.940 --> 00:44:58.360
and impact their lives. And that
warehouse and that space is just been

00:44:58.370 --> 00:44:58.640
such

00:44:58.650 --> 00:45:02.920
a catalyst for that you know and we’ve been
able to throw parties for him and help

00:45:02.930 --> 00:45:06.840
fundraise for him and help get the word
out and just celebrate with him and cry

00:45:06.850 --> 00:45:09.480
with him when you know hard
things happen but like that’s

00:45:09.490 --> 00:45:14.260
a big piece and then another
good friend, since Tyler Axel

00:45:14.270 --> 00:45:18.990
He started a company called the Bradley Mountain
and he started in his garage in O.B.

00:45:18.100 --> 00:45:23.850
Making kind of like little leather belts
and things like that and he needed

00:45:23.860 --> 00:45:30.040
a place to grow out of his garage and he
came and took the corner of one of one of

00:45:30.050 --> 00:45:35.730
our like kind of Maker’s areas and over the
last three years we’ve watched him grow

00:45:35.740 --> 00:45:36.170
into like

00:45:36.420 --> 00:45:40.880
8 full time staff he’s got one hundred
fifty thousand followers on Instagram He

00:45:40.890 --> 00:45:44.050
sends his bag his Like makes
these incredible leathern and wax

00:45:44.060 --> 00:45:49.370
Canvas bags. And sends them all over the
world and they’re expanding now and we move

00:45:49.380 --> 00:45:53.810
out there and take bigger space and he’s
collaborated with rap brands in that and

00:45:53.820 --> 00:45:58.300
we sell his bags in our store and it’s
like such a rad dream that we got to be

00:45:58.310 --> 00:45:59.410
a part of because we had
a space and you know again we didn't invest in him but I had left sitting down with

Tyler and just talking to him about his journey and like encouraging him and

reminding him that he's doing something great and I think that you know has

a lot of value to be able to watch and watch his dream literally grow in front of

us like over the years.

Again we just want to thank you for coming

My pleasure I hope that's what you guys look for.

— End of Transcription —