

Wichita Chamber Business Accelerator

Episode 126

Mark Daniels

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Don Sherman: [00:00:00] welcome to another exciting edition of the WCBA powered of course by Evergy. First, thank you for listening. Don't forget to like us. Love us share us. We truly appreciate you checking us out. In the [00:01:00] house today. E. Wichita Cheesecake Company.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: That's what's up, we have Mr. Mark Daniels here with us.

How are you?



Mark Daniels: I am great this morning. Thank you so much for having me.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Of course. We're excited to have you here because just yesterday I had some cheesecake. Okay. Yeah. And it was delightful. Didn't share, but I mean, well, so if you would please for our listeners, let's skip over that, get back to the story.

Could you tell us who you are and what you do?

Mark Daniels: Well, my name is Mark Daniels. I'm part owner. If I say that I'm the owner, my wife would be really upset with me and stuff. So I'm partner owner of the Wichita Cheesecake Company. We are a family owned business here located at 8 0 1 East Douglas.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: 8 0 1 East Douglas.

Where is that at?

Mark Daniels: It is at the corner of Douglas and Rock Island.

Okay. So just a short distance from here.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Walking distance almost. Because we live in a wonderful walking district in our downtown, [00:02:00] we have the opportunity to go over there and have some cheesecake and walk it off and make it back to the office.

Mark Daniels: Absolutely.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Nice, nice. So how long have you been in business, mark?

Mark Daniels: Well, this is our fifth year downtown. So in the brick and mortar itself, we actually started in a commercial kitchen. So this is year seven for us.

Don Sherman: Wow. Yeah, that's a quick seven years. Absolutely.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Yeah. It seems just like yesterday. So let's talk about that a little bit. So you started in a commercial kitchen. What does that look like for people who are interested in, you know, pursuing this path or creating their own line of, of gourmet goods?

Mark Daniels: Well, it's definitely getting better. When we started, we searched throughout the city to find a place that we could actually bake from.

The Kansas Department of Agriculture requires that you actually bake from a, a commercial kitchen. Mm-hmm. So we searched, couldn't find anything and we finally found the church that would allow us to use their kitchen. So we. Went to New Zion. They allowed us to come in and we started to bake from there.[00:03:00]

It was a pretty hard task actually. We were delivering everything individually so every cake made was being delivered directly from there and stuff. So, that was the first year. So it was definitely a hard year hard to grow.

You know, and hard to kind of control your growth process from there.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: So you decided, okay, there's a void in the market.

Mark Daniels: Sure.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: And we want to have a cheesecake company. Tell us the origin of this story. How did, how did this become.

Mark Daniels: So, I mean, initially we knew it was one something that Grace had done for years just for the family. It was something she enjoyed.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: tell who Grace is.

Mark Daniels: Ah, okay. I guess I skipped over that part. Grace is my wife of 18 years.

And so even before we met, she was making cheesecake. Making baked goods and stuff for the family. Something that we never considered as a business for ourselves. It was just a hobby of

hers.

It was something that she liked to do. But often people would say to us you should do this as a business. [00:04:00] Again, we never thought much about it. We just kind of continued to do it. And then there, there was a point where our nephew worked at a bank. He took the cheesecake to an office party that they had.

They enjoyed it. They said, Hey again, we think you should do this as a business. We dismissed it again. The bank manager actually owns a, a lighting company here. He suggested that we do the Wichita Bridal Show. Again, we didn't know much about the business itself or the process. He said, Hey I will sponsor you guys.

I'll pay for your entry fee. And you just come and, you know, take a look at what's going on. We did that. The first day that we were there was open from 10 to five. By 12 o'clock we were outta cheesecake.

Oh, wow.

so we rushed home, baked more. We came back the following day. Same, same thing.

You know, we were outta cheesecake, so we thought, Hey, maybe we've got something here. So I'm a finance guy, so I'm a little methodical. Decided to kind of approach it really, really slow. That was where the commercial kitchen came [00:05:00] in. We figured if There were, of course, now I, I don't wanna mention their name and give them any publicity, but, you know, there's a large company that people have been clamoring for for some time to come to Wichita on several occasions.

They've denied Wichita the opportunity to locate their business here. So we knew that there was a void here that Wichita wanted a dedicated cheesecake company. So we thought with that being the niche that. You know, grace already did it. You know, maybe we would explore if Wichita really wanted us.

So that was the reason that we decided to go the commercial kitchen route. And then of course delivering the cheesecake, you know, individually it kinda got hard. Plus I was working a full-time job and, but we knew that, hey, in order for us to grow, we really need to kind of take the next step. Just happened to be downtown for work.

I passed by a space down there that I saw a for lease sign on, turned around, grabbed their telephone number and decided to give them a call. It was accidental. So we explored that. [00:06:00] We came in we signed a, a lease, and then about two weeks in, I realized I can't do this. There's no way that I can work a, a full-time job and do this too.

So I quit on the spot. I took a loan from my 401k. Paid six months in advance on that particular

space, opened that space up. Three and a half years later, we needed to grow. We were kind of being stuffed into that spot. We moved down the street and two years later we could really use more space.

So we're really growing and it's just, I, I've taken a slow approach to, to the growth itself. And it's just kind of been rewarding. I mean, it's really, really nice to have the opportunity to turn that key, you know, every day in a space that, and go somewhere that you really enjoy.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Yeah, that is, that's a remark. Remarkable story. And, you know, you're not the first person who said that this area you know, finding commercial kitchens is, is, has been a difficult thing for, for people, but thankful for the ones that we do have.

So that People who are [00:07:00] entrepreneurial-minded have that opportunity to go in and bake and to start their business. So let me ask this. You're in five years, seven years total, but five years with in brick and mortar, and you're ready to grow again. So what are your thoughts on that?

Do you think that you are going to wait it out for a little bit or do you think that you're gonna.

Mark Daniels: Well, my, my approach hasn't changed, so I, I think that You grow as the business and as the customers allow you to grow.

So we added food. We knew that people were only gonna eat so much dessert. They were gonna only gonna eat so much cheesecake. So, recently we purchased the 1st of April, we purchased Metro Grill. Okay. Metro Grill was a business that had existed. It started in the mall in 2004, and they grew to several different locations here in the city.

Closed the business down. And we found that chef, he had moved to New Jersey. We brought him back in July from the owner that had [00:08:00] purchased Metro Grill at that particular point. And then we bought a portion of it, the downtown portion April. So just the next step towards that journey of growing our business and, you know, we brought in alcohol and we added alcohol to what we're doing as well.

So just that methodical approach, again, to trying to grow the business. Laterally now, and then we'll just expand, you know, as we can figure out how to grow

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: that is, that is wonderful because, you know, I saw that, you know, Metro Grill that you guys, I thought you were co-locating.

Don Sherman: I did too.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Separate

Mark Daniels: Initially we were, I mean, that was how it started in July. We brought them into the space because my thought was, here's a business that already has its own following. I don't have to grow a following. We can just kind of start to reclaim some of those customers they had.

And we would capture that business, more people coming in to eat, they would be exposed to the cheesecake and we would grow that way. But after a while, I mean, I think anytime you have two business owners in one space mm-hmm And you kind of have some differences [00:09:00] in how you grow and, and the way you approach business, then you kind of have to figure those things out.

So our thing was, we're always gonna be Wichita Cheesecake Company. No matter who was in the space with us, it was always gonna be the way that we wanted to grow. So, The next step was to just kind of move that person out. And he didn't wanna relinquish the business, but he thought that our approach to the way, you know, we were wanting to grow was conducive to the way he thought Metro Grill should grow as well and stuff.

So he was willing to sell us a portion of that business and so that we would be a hundred percent.

Don Sherman: Excellent.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: That is awesome.

Don Sherman: That's pretty cool. Yeah, that's pretty cool. I don't know if Ebony and I could get along in a business, so I was just thinking about that. That'd be the shortest venture of all time.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Oh my, not the shortest.

Mark Daniels: Not

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Not the shortest.

Don Sherman: Let's let's get into this. Who's doing the baking?

Mark Daniels: Well, I have two daughters. Okay. That also assist us in, in [00:10:00] baking. So it's the four of us that actually everything that comes out that goes anywhere wholesale side or retail side, all comes from the four of us.

Don Sherman: Well, let's go, let's get in front of that. Who, who taught y'all how to bake? I mean, what gave you the audacity to think you can make cheesecakes That everybody would want.

How did that happen?

Mark Daniels: Well, now, initially it wasn't supposed to be that way. Again, I, I started out by saying I'm the finance guy,
guy.

Don Sherman: Right? Yeah. That's where I'm at.

Mark Daniels: I have a finance degree, so nothing that has to do with baking.

So it was, it was really Grace. I mean, someone showed her just a formula how to put it together.

So then over the years she kind of tweaked it to remake that, how she wanted it to be, what she wanted it to taste like. So everything that we do at this particular point has come from Grace.

I mean, she taught us how to make the cheesecake and then me being just a, a foodie, I just kind of came in. I added some things that I thought, you know, would work in the cheesecake. It has so far, and it's just [00:11:00] kind of been that. But I mean, the formula is hers. we give her a hundred percent of the credit.

I mean everything that we know started there.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Who came up with the banana pudding cheesecake?

Cuz whoever did that one.

Mark Daniels: Well, you know, honestly, it was what we thought. So my thing was she already had the structure. She already had the base, but I thought... my family years ago was in the food business as well.

So I always thought recognizable things would be the thing that would kind of separate us from. The way other people baked cheesecakes and stuff. So we knew growing up sweet potato pie, banana pudding, peach cobbler, you know, caramel apple, those things were what it was. It is a cultural thing. Mm-hmm.

So if you stick that into, and cheesecake is a really good template for anything that you want to put in there food wise. So you can, it's really easy to customize the, the taste for you know, whatever you like.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Yeah. Shout out to that because that is the best, that's the one that I had the other day. Okay. And I still have a little bit left, so I may, I [00:12:00] may think about sharing.

Don Sherman: Did you, did you have alcohol? You know you have alcohol then?

No. It was, you should double the foot traffic. With Ebony if you got alcohol. So you should be good. Wow. Your business model is on point for Ebony. Okay. So help me understand, in the restaurant business, and I've never been, I don't think is, is it, is it hard? I mean, is it hard? I mean, the hard, I know it's hard to hang a shingle, whatever you do.

But is it restaurant seems even harder to me. Help us understand your mindset in making that decision.

I mean, cuz you even said at one point you just said, okay, I can't do both. I quit and you did your thing. What help walk us through that mindset of what you went through.

Mark Daniels: When I say that it's difficult I mean, that's an understatement. So I spent 10 years in the military. I kind of grew up as a military kid, so I kind of understand structure and all those things.

But when you get into the, [00:13:00] unlike any other business, you have all these multiple personalities that come in that you try to cater to on a daily basis, plus the rising cost of food products. The rising cost of just taking care of the building itself you know, and maintaining all the things that are inside the building.

Plus again, my daughters, my wife, you know, that are in there. They, so you have those dynamics. We have a chef in there that, you know, is Colombian descent.

Mm-hmm.

So, I mean, you have all those things inside of the business that you're managing plus, You know, just trying to figure out how do you grow the business itself.

So, I mean, all those things kind of meld into one thing and you have to be, I'm kind of the person who no matter what's going on, I get the phone call. So anytime it doesn't go right

mm-hmm.

You know, you get the blame. Mm-hmm. Sometimes you get the praise as well, you know, when the business is going well and stuff.

But I mean, it is really, I spend about 70 hours a week you know, on an ongoing basis. So no vacation. [00:14:00] You know, so you're kinda, you're kinda married to the job itself or you're employed by the job. Yeah.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Yeah.

Mark Daniels: So figuring out how to find people that are reliable, that are gonna show up, show up on time, do the job, you know, you have all those different dynamics that you have to be able to put the pieces in place to kind of make everything work.

And I mean, that's a job in itself. And then you have the job with a task of producing that. Particular product that you produce and then, you know, we wholesale for other businesses. So then you have those things on top of it as well. You know, how do you maintain that product get it from where you are to that customer itself.

And then, you know, again, just trying to figure out how to grow, you know, what's the next step for the business without creating, you know, a situation where you put yourself out of business trying to grow too fast. So just, it is a constant management. You know, of all these things or all these factors that are in the business

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: that, that is super cool. And I don't mean to jump in, but you already did. You know what, but you know, [00:15:00] you talked about your wholesale versus your retail. Can you go into that a little bit for us and your strategy around that and how you, how you decided that, hey, in order for this, this model to work, we need to, to wholesale.

Mark Daniels: Well, I mean the, the thing about customers itself. So on the retail side, you can never predict when a customer is gonna come in and purchase something. So, I mean, you can send out advertising, you can encourage the customer to come back in. But my thought was always, if I build a book of business that's reoccurring.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Yeah.

Mark Daniels: Then I actually know what that monthly revenue is, or I have an idea of what that revenue will be. So at some point we would like to be 60 40, where we have 60% retail, 40% wholesale. So that way you would have a floor of where you would start to build a business from and you know, something that you could kind of figure out on an ongoing basis as far as from a growth standpoint, you could build your model from there.

That if [00:16:00] I knew I had 40% of my revenue that was planned, I could kind of predict almost. On an ongoing basis of how fast I could grow the business itself. And then I could start to kind of plan for how I would attack the retail side itself.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Mm-hmm. Thank you for going over that with us.

Don Sherman: You went from the house to the church kitchen and you went straight to a storefront.

Mark Daniels: Mm-hmm.

Don Sherman: Did you ever think about doing a food truck?

Mark Daniels: Not, I, I mean, we've had conversations about it. I won't say that I thought about it.

I started out years ago with a barbecue food truck, and I did that for two years, and I think that's even harder than the brick and mortar because you're baking something somewhere. Mm-hmm. Putting it somewhere, transporting it to another place. So you're setting up, breaking down and you have to do all those things in reverse.

So we're not really thinking about food truck. [00:17:00] What we did think about is vending machines. I came across a lady who uh, is in Tennessee who's doing a vending machine for cheesecake. Wow. So that's kind of the next thing that we're looking at. Finding. Locations that we could put the vending machine at.

We've already identified a company who can who can manufacture the machine. So, I mean, I think if we were to do something from this standpoint close to the food truck, that would be where we would start.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: You heard it here first.

Don Sherman: Now, you know, you're gonna have to, you're gonna have to have a vending machine built like an atm.

Right?

Mark Daniels: Yes, sir.

Don Sherman: I'm trying to get those cheesecakes outta there. Oh, man.

Mark Daniels: E

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Well, well, friends it's time to hear a word from our sponsors. We'll be back to hear more from Mark Daniels and the Wichita Cheesecake Company.

[00:18:00]

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Welcome back friends. We're here with Mark Daniels and the Wichita Cheesecake Company. Mark, you've been talking to us about one of my favorite subjects, which is food and cheesecake. So tell me this before I ask you the real question. Do you have any of those with zero calories or 50 calories?

Can you gimme that one?

Mark Daniels: We do do sugar free.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Sugar free?

Mark Daniels: Now we sugar free and gluten free. We do those, but only to order. So those aren't. Options that we normally just have in the restaurant. But you can call and get a sugar-free cake if you want one.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: that. That's a good one. But I need zero calories.

Mark Daniels: No,

no. Zero calories

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Alright,

Don Sherman: just one quick, just for the record. What, how many calories is a [00:19:00] slice of cheesecake?

Mark Daniels: Well, I mean, it really depends on what flavor you have. I mean, because we have some that have chocolate in it. We have some that have fruit in it, but you, you can just figure it's a whole lot of sugar in every slice.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Yeah. A whole lot of delicious.

Don Sherman: Nevermind. Carry on.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: How many flavors do you guys have now?

Mark Daniels: We list 33.

Don Sherman: Wow.

Mark Daniels: But we have so many that we stopped putting all of the flavors on because people were starting to want all kinds of

of

things and stuff. So we just stopped listing those at about 33. But we have on our menu 33, and we kind of, if you look at the website itself, there's only 10.

That we list on there. And those are the 10 that we have dedicated in the store at

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: At any time.

Mark Daniels: But you can order any of the other 20 plus that are on

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: So what is that website for our listeners?

Mark Daniels: It is

Wichitacheesecakecompany.com.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: All right.

Wichita cheese cheesecake company.com. Are you on social media?

Mark Daniels: We are. Same, same [00:20:00] flag. We fly on everything. Instagram and Facebook.

No Twitter. No, no, no TikTok yet and stuff, but we're gonna work on some of those things. We are, CML Collective does our advertising and

Don Sherman: Okay. Christina

Mark Daniels: uh,

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: CML collective.

Don Sherman: She has to do everything.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: I know. know,

That's good. I love that. She does Very proud work. She and her team. Exactly. So we need to follow you on social. So let me ask this. You said you have two daughters who help out as well. Have you already began thinking about, you know, you said that you are working 70 hours and I know you've only been in the game for seven years, but are you already thinking about succession planning and you know, the next generation?

Mark Daniels: Yeah, I mean, it, it's a scary thought sometime because they don't always express the, the level of sticktuitiveness that I think they should and stuff. But it, it was always the hope in the beginning for building the business itself that at some point they would come in and succeed what we started and, grow it to, you know, I mean, if you think about some of the larger companies, that's how it [00:21:00] started.

You know, a grandparent or or parent starts the business. The kid comes in and rows the

business to an unimaginable success. So we hope the same thing for, for our daughters.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Yeah, I hope so as well.

You know, you, you get that a lot when you hear these stories that sometimes the next generations, like, because they worked it, sometimes they don't wanna continue it, you know, and then other times you see that one of them wanna do it or skips a generation and the grandkids are the ones who, who does it as well.

So I said all of that to say, if you wanna adopt me and teach me how to make a cheesecake.

Don Sherman: I knew it was coming back. I

Mark Daniels: We're always looking,

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: you know, I'm just saying, I. Just think about that. Just think about that, Don.

Don Sherman: Nice, nice. You started in 2017?

Mark Daniels: Yes.

Don Sherman: Okay. And that was before Covid. Help us understand, how did you do during Covid?

You're still here, so you survived. So what did you do during Covid to make it pop. Continue to make it pop.

Mark Daniels: I, I think most, like most businesses the third [00:22:00] party platforms came in the door dashes, the Grubhubs and all of those delivery platforms. So we leaned on those guys. I mean, we knew that just because Covid was here, people were, were still gonna eat, you know, they still were gonna want some of the same things.

Just the way they got it was gonna be different and stuff. So, we brought all those platforms in.

Don Sherman: You, you didn't have before or no?

Mark Daniels: We didn't. I mean, I, I think I had DoorDash or I think it was Postmates at that time that we had, and we were using those guys.

Don Sherman: Wow.

Mark Daniels: And then again, once we knew that, you know, people weren't traditionally going

to houses, they weren't going to the businesses.

People were masked up. They were afraid to, you know, come out of the door sometimes, even if a delivery was there, leaving on the porch, you know, those type things and stuff. So, I mean, we did quite a bit of that. And there were a number of occasions where people still came to the shop to pick up. We were in the smaller location at that particular point, so there was a barrier.

We had a counter in between us and, and the customers. We were masked up and we, we never [00:23:00] closed. We were there, we wrote it out just like, you know, most of the other businesses We went through the process of not being able to get some of the supplies that we needed. So, I mean, that was hard. We saw the plastic containers that we used, double, triple in price because it was harder to get some of those things and

Mm-hmm.

So, I mean, we wrote it out, we stuck it in there and just kind of made it through just like, you know, most of the other people in the businesses that were still operating.

Don Sherman: I love your strategy about bringing in Metro Grill and I mean, I just thought that was pretty cool.

Can you share what the menu is like now on your Metro Grill side?

Mark Daniels: Yeah, so Metro Grill, we didn't change their menu at all. They had the Cuban, I mean, now recently we've added, again for me familiar things like we have mac and cheese bites. We have some, a shrimp po boy that I've added to the menu. Some chicken tenders and fries, but I mean, their menu. They had some kind of iconic things, the Cuban sandwich itself and Mike's [00:24:00] Colombian descent.

Mm-hmm. So he brought some of those things with him. Infamous Bob. They kind of had some chicken chicken caprise sandwich. So I mean, the menu is exactly the same as it was from 2004.

Don Sherman: So share with the listeners. How are you promoting that? Are you promoting Metro Grill separately from Wichita Cheesecake or that they're together, or how are you promoting that? So folks know it's a full service restaurant at this point now.

Mark Daniels: Just coming out again. We just took over ownership on the 1st of April,

Don Sherman: Oh, okay. This is recent.

Mark Daniels: Yeah, so it's just been a month. So you'll start to see us incorporate Metro Grill.

We still have both.

Up on top of the, the building itself. And we won't change that because again, I realize that Metro Grill has people that recognize it from 2004. So we'll keep that up, but you'll start to see us blend Metro Grill in with our advertising as well. It'll start to appear on our website. Cool. You know, and you'll start to see it kind of all over.

And even from a promotion standpoint, we'll start to promote out that you know, we own [00:25:00] Metro Grill at this point.

Don Sherman: Okay. Have you ever made a key lime cheesecake?

Mark Daniels: We have it in the, in the case today.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: What, just for you,

Mark Daniels: Lemondrop, key lime.

Don Sherman: have you had a watermelon cheesecake?

Mark Daniels: No, we haven't done watermelon.

The, the thing about watermelon and flavors like passion fruit, those are light flavors. So when you start to bake it, the flavors kind of starts to dissipate. So I'm always careful to put something in lavender. If you put too much lavender in, it tastes like soap. Right. And those are light flavors, so I kind of tend to steer away from that.

We've had a lot of people ask for mango again, mango light flavor. So you really have to concentrate it to get the flavor to come through. But it's one that we've been thinking about trying to just figure out. I mean, we've done things like cherry limeade, we have that one. what else do we have?

Blueberry lemonade. Strawberry lemonade, you know, things like that.

Don Sherman: Now, back on the lavender. Well, I guess I'm getting old. I didn't know lavender was a taste. I thought it was a smell.[00:26:00]

Mark Daniels: It, it's both.

So lavender is a flower itself that can be concentrated down.

Don Sherman: I'm sorry,

Mark Daniels: Yeah.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: laughing

Mark Daniels: we have done a lavender lemonade.

Don Sherman: I didn't know Lavender is something you eat. Hey, my bad. Hey I'm old. I can do that. So like I said, I love the strategy about Metro Grill. So what's going on in the next five years for Wichita Cheesecake slash Metro Grill?

Mark Daniels: So they had me sign an nda, so I can't really talk a whole lot about.

Don Sherman: Almost had scoop.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Almost had it.

Don Sherman: Dang.

Mark Daniels: But the possibility exists that within the next 90 days to six months there'll be a Wichita two location. Somewhere in town. Somewhere in town.

They're building a, there's a concept that's going up in the city over that. They're actually we're meeting with the engineers now. To kind of get the, the whole gist of how this layout is gonna be, if it goes the way that I think, in the way that we've, we've talked in the meetings that we've had so far it is gonna [00:27:00] be a phenomenal concept.

I think it, it'll be really good for Wichita Cheesecake yay Company as well. And again, it would be that second location for us.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: That's dope.

Don Sherman: Excellent. Excellent. We have congratulations in advance on that. Mm-hmm. And man, coming to somewhere near you in the metro. He didn't say where, but we got some scoop. We got some scoop.

What else, e?

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Well, I just have one last question. Okay. As we are wrapping up.

You know, you said you were in the military, you've traveled a lot of places you didn't grow up in Wichita. Why Wichita? What made you decide to come here and, you know, and live and decide to start the business here? Cuz you could have started it anywhere.

Mark Daniels: So because we were military, nowhere was home. Right. We, I think I spent five years in Louisiana when we were growing up. So my dad retired in New York. His last base was Plattsburgh Air Force Base in New York. He came here to work for Boeing.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Gotcha.

Gotcha.

Mark Daniels: [00:28:00] And when I had gone into the military and I got out after 10 years, my parents were here.

So I came here because they were here. Ah.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Ah, gotcha.

Mark Daniels: I've been here for 31 years since.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Well, we're so glad you've decided to make Wichita your home and decided to grow your business here. So to all our, all our listeners and all the business owners make certain that you cater and use the Wichita Cheesecake Company.

Don Sherman: Exactly. We, we have partnered with the Cheesecake Company at least buying some gift certificates to give out to folks, so, yeah. Excellent. Okay, you dealt with Ebony long enough. Time for you to be rewarded. We're gonna do word association. I give you one word. You gimme one word back.

It's not wrong cuz it's your word. Are you ready?

Mark Daniels: I'm ready.

Don Sherman: Leader.

Mark Daniels: Discipline.

Don Sherman: Success.

Mark Daniels: Motivation.

Don Sherman: College.

Mark Daniels: Education.

Don Sherman: Beverage.

Mark Daniels: Sweet tea.

Don Sherman: Sweet tea.

Mark Daniels: Sweet tea.

Don Sherman: Of course, with the cheesecake. [00:29:00] Failure.

Mark Daniels: Impossible.

Don Sherman: Entrepreneur.

Mark Daniels: Growth.

Don Sherman: Wichita.

Mark Daniels: Growing.

Don Sherman: Vacation.

Mark Daniels: Needed.

Don Sherman: Hero.

Mark Daniels: Parents.

Don Sherman: Chamber.

Mark Daniels: Wichita.

Don Sherman: Family.

Important.

Last but not least, fun.

Mark Daniels: Always.

Don Sherman: Always. Excellent. Thank you for coming in my man. It is great to see you again.

Mark Daniels: Thank you for having me.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Absolutely. This was a fun one.

Friends, if you would make certain that you share this with your circle and make certain that you let us know who you wanna hear from next Till next time.

Don Sherman: Peace. [00:30:00]