

Wichita Chamber Business Accelerator

Episode 129

Jeff Turner (Part Two)

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Don Sherman: [00:00:00] As promised, we said this was gonna be part two. Here is part two. If you want to hear part one, make sure you go back to last week's episode.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: welcome back. We are here with Jeff Turner and we are talking about great things in the Wichita community and investment. So Jeff, can you talk to us a little bit about why you invest and do you think that Wichita as a community or as a region, our region, do we invest enough in ourselves, whether it be from infrastructure or people, or what does that look like from your lens.



Jeff Turner: That's a great question, Ebony and I, I think it's probably a perspective issue if, if you're an entrepreneur and you're trying to get investors and you're finding it difficult to get investors, you probably don't think the community invests enough.

I think the community invests quite a bit. And I know there is a, a lot of resources in the community. So I, I think [00:01:00] it's important if you're an entrepreneur as an example and you are seeking investment And you're not getting it, the most important thing to do is look in the mirror and figure out what you're not doing to connect with investment. I don't think the answer is jump up and leave and go to Silicon because I, I suspect if your presentation in Wichita doesn't get any interest, it won't in Silicon Valley either. I know there's resources in the community. I believe that if you have a good plan and if. You can convince people that you are the right person to execute the resources will follow. Now, I have several biases in the, this area. One of the, one of the biases I have is too much money [00:02:00] is a much bigger detriment to success if you think about it, if there are, if you have too many resources applied to a problem, They just get in each other's if they're if you don't have quite enough, everybody has to work really hard to get it And I think that adds to the cohesiveness of getting it done. One of my favorite stories of all time is the Wright brothers, who built the first powered flight airplane. And what's interesting is at Kitty Hawk the day that their airplane flew, there were five people and who witnessed this first powered and one of those witnesses was a [00:03:00] photographer. And chances are that if the photographer had not been there, nobody would've believed it. Now, juxtapose that with a guy named, I think his name was Dr. Langley, who was well funded and ha

was trying to launch an airplane off of a boat with a catapult in the Potomac River. At the same time. And when he, when he did that, because he was well funded by an organization called The Smithsonian, which was backed at, I think at that time by the United States government.

He had lots of people watching. Lots of people there. But he failed. He didn't get it off the ground. And it was the Wright Brothers, a couple eccentric, crazy bicycle shop owning entrepreneurs. [00:04:00] And really a genius behind him who was the engineer who figured out the engine and making the engine light enough.

And it was just this tiny little team underfunded, under supported, underappreciated, who just grounded out. Now the interesting thing about the, the Wright Brothers, and I'm not a historian or I've just read a little bit about it. There is no Wright airplanes today.

Right? I mean, they're the ones who invented power flight or were the first to get there, but they didn't turn it into a thriving In fact, I read there was a, they were sued 10. They were either sued or they sued 10 times for patent infringement. One of the main people they liked to sue was a guy named Curtiss. You might have heard of the Curtiss [00:05:00] flyer, where the company ended up being Curtiss Wright, and then that company was assumed by other companies or became part of the supply chain.

But we don't fly around in Wright airplanes, we fly around in Boeing airplanes. And and so what I find fascinating about that is the entrepreneurial journey. The invention, the commercialization of it, and then the successful growth of it are stages in business development.

It's very unusual for a apple to to emerge where the, the same people who created it are the ones who, who helped it grow. I just, I just find that fascinating. So, back to your fundamental question of investment. Is there enough? No. There's never enough. Is there enough? Yeah, [00:06:00] there's enough.

If you, you know, if you apply it well, I mean, every single year when I was at Boeing and then at Spirit every single year, my request for budget was way over the ability to provide budget. And so it's a, it's a, it's an issue of prioritization, of timing, of choosing. I, I've, I've often said one of the most important things a leader is help dis help the organization decide what we're not Because there's always fun, good things to Or, or I say fun, good things, but there there's always things that somebody thinks are gonna make gonna be some you can't do 'em all.

Don Sherman: do. it all.

Jeff Turner: You gotta choose what you're gonna spend your energy on.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: To that point, We've talked about monetary investment. What about [00:07:00] investment in people and, and leadership development?

Jeff Turner: Well, I'm so glad you asked that. That's a real passion of mine these days is leadership development.

in fact, I've been thinking about it more lately in terms of what have I learned? What, what do I think's really important for leadership? And I I'm kind of working around like five words. One is care.

I think if you're gonna really be an effective leader, you gotta care, care beyond yourself, you gotta care for the mission, the vision, the organization, whatever it is. Patrick Lencioni I, I was rummaging through some of my books not long ago and ran across one that he did Five, five Mistakes that CEOs and the first one I thought, man, I should have read this [00:08:00] 20 years ago. But the first one was caring about the wrong thing. It's, it's caring about yourself and your own self-image if you're a instead of caring about your team and the effect of the organization.

And so the first one was care. The second one was share. I believe really firmly in sharing the benefit of what's been accomplished sharing together as a team. But one, one of my favorite ideas, and I'm sure it wasn't original with me, but, I, claim it, is what I call situational leadership. And a lot of people I've, I've, I've read about that. I've looked at it, and one of the things about situational leadership is they say, well, in this situation, how should I lead? Should I be command and control? Should I be collaborative? Should I, what should I be? I, in my mind, I adapted that a little bit to say, in this situation, who [00:09:00] of us on this team should lead? And my best example is when the tornado hit the plant. I think it was 2012, I don't remember exactly. I mean, it was, it was, there were no lights. You, we, I drove out there, Mike King, who was head ops for me, and wonderful guy, great leader. We drove out there together and, and it was eerie.

We got out. The only light was from the security building because they had a power generator cuz that was the command station if anything like a tornado hit the plant. So it was just eerie and people were beginning to assemble. And we had a room, about the size of the room we're in today. Had a big conference table in the middle of it and it was packed cuz all the.

Facil, some of the facilities team, leaders of the group had come and I walked in, had to kind [00:10:00] of push through people to get in, and there was one seat left and it was the command and control seat, you know, at the end of the table facing everybody. And nobody was in it.

Right.

It was my seat.

Well, I didn't sit down because I'm, I'm praying, dear Lord, please help me.

I don't know I don't know how to lead these people. I know they need leadership, but I, I Well, laying on the desk in front of that chair was the Spirit Disaster Recovery manual.

Okay. Which we did every year. And fortunately, standing right beside that table, Was Ron Redford, and some of you maybe know Ron, but, but Ron was one of the middle level leaders in our facilities and Ron was the guy responsible to make sure we had a disaster recovery [00:11:00] plan in place at all times. And so I, I looked at that book and I still stood there. I opened the book, and on the front, the front cover page was a letter signed by me that said, this is our disaster recovery plan for 2012. You know, blah, blah, blah, signed, and I looked at Ron and I said, did you write this well, not all of it.

I said, Do you know what's in it? He said absolutely. I said, do you know it from cover to cover? He said yeah, absolutely. Okay, Ron, sit down.

And I pulled the chair back. And I said, Ron, sit down. And he sat down in the power chair and I said to the group, I said to him, Ron, until you tell me we can go back to kind of normal, I work for you.

And so do [00:12:00] does everybody else in this room. Nobody else in this room knows more about what we should do right now than you do. And so we are all. Gonna submit ourselves to your leadership. And I don't think Ron moved from for almost except to get up and go to the restroom get a cup of coffee or whatever and come back.

And when he did, Sonya, who was his assistant, second in command, another great leader in our facility she sat in While he went and grabbed a few hours So to me, sharing the responsibility, sharing, sharing the load Is an important part of leadership. I like the word pear, like a paring knife. You pair things away, prune. Mm-hmm.

No organization's effective without [00:13:00] pairing. Pairing resources. Sometimes, unfortunately, pairing people, Jim Collins talks about getting the right people on the bus in And sometimes you have take somebody out of a seat to put the right person in.

Don Sherman: Mm-hmm.

Jeff Turner: To me, as a leader, that was the hardest thing to do. Frankly, the only way I got to the point that I could do it at all is I had to realize that the Health of the organization more important than the comfort of any individual. Because unless we could make Spirit successful. Together, make, there was no way that Spirit could reward us and keep us, functioning well.

So, so getting the right team, so pairings really important.

[00:14:00]

Jeff Turner: the fourth one I, I like is dare. You gotta dare to do something different. And

I was thinking about courage one time and I, thought, you know, for me, courage is when my

integrity overcomes my fear. Integrity. It's not just the idea of being morally right, but it's the idea of being true to what you know, but you're afraid to do it [00:15:00] cuz you're afraid to fail. And I think creating Spirit is a great example of that because it needed to be done.

But gosh, was it fearful. I mean, there was, it is like that, that day I told you about when I looked in the mirror and said, what are you doing?

Don Sherman: Yep. Yep.

Jeff Turner: Are you outta your mind? And, and so, so dare is really important. And then the, the last one I have on my list is prepare.

If you looked at my transcript of all the training that I took when I was at Boeing, And Spirit. It, it is just enormous. It's longer than your arm. Of all the training that I've received over the years to learn to be a better manager, to learn to be a better people person, to be a [00:16:00] better strategic thinker to it just goes on and on. And it, it's, it's constant preparation.

Which leads me to, there's a, there's a group in town here that I'm, that I've a part of called Lead Wichita.

And lead Wichita, one of the main things that Lead Wichita does is, sponsors, supports, puts on the Global Leadership Summit.

Have you been?

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: I have. yes.

Jeff Turner: My wife, Rhonda, who's a wonderful wonderful person, came home from, our church used to sponsor. Global Leadership Summit at the church,

and she came home and she said, Jeff, I went to the Global Leadership Summit and you should go. You would love it. And I said, oh, sweetheart I'd love to but I'm just [00:17:00] way too busy, that's what I said.

What I thought was, yeah, right. I'm gonna go to my church to learn about leading my company. I don't think so. Which now reminds me of a quote I heard Charles Koch say one time which is arrogance makes us dumber than genetics ever could.

Don Sherman: Wow.

Jeff Turner: And I, which I love that because I was so arrogant

Don Sherman: Oh man

Jeff Turner: That I thought I couldn't learn. And that's one of the things about the Global Leadership Summit said it, its roots were in a big church in, in Chicago, but it has now. Ben Hutton was the head of Lead Wichita. He and some friends started it. Have great respect for Ben and Mark, his dad, great friend.

But they said, you know what, this is so much bigger than a [00:18:00] church. And so they brought Lead Wichita to sponsor it for the greater good of our community. And we moved it to century two. And then since have moved it to Intrust Arena. But I've been going to, I was looking at it I think I've been going for 15 years. I finally told Rhonda, okay, look, hun, I'll, I'll go one afternoon, and I went one afternoon. I think I came back the next day and I've been going ever since.

And I, that was like 2007, eight or nine, somewhere back there and I, I will just tell you, without equivocation, the Global Leadership Summit is the best, most cost effective. Leadership energizing material and growth material that I have ever seen compiled, [00:19:00] and the price is embarrassingly I,

I mean, I looked this morning at the, and, and you can find it by, by going to GLS/GLN. Google it. Don't go to it. Just Google it 2023 and it'll, it'll pop up. But it's, I think, I mean, you, you have world class speakers.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: I agree.

And from all, I mean from all over. And it's something

Jeff Turner: I know

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: anyone who attends can get something out of it. And you know, one of the things about it is you know, even if you can't attend the entire time, if you're ever to go for a morning or an afternoon

Jeff Turner: Oh yeah,

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: then That's

good. Just be able to go in and glean something from them.

Jeff Turner: The headline price right now, I think the headline price is, I think 199. You can get it for 179 now, but it's just, I look at those speakers and I go, well, sometimes you'll get a brochure from a organization [00:20:00] that's putting on a one day summit or something.

It'll be \$5,000 in Dallas.

To hear the same people. I mean, I was looking at Condoleezza Rice.

Is gonna be, I, I remember her from several years ago and what a great speaker she is. There's a lady named Francesca Gino, who's a, I think a Harvard professor on leadership, and great.

Patrick Lencioni, who we've, had here. He's always fun. A guy named Dave Ramsey's gonna be this year. But I, I went back and just, just started listing all the people I learned from. Dr. Henry Cloud is on fairly often. He's an industrial psychologist or a clinical psychologist, he works with a lot of He did one clear back in 2012 called necessary endings.

Don Sherman: Hmm.

Jeff Turner: And I think my idea of paring, you know, paring

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: A knife

Jeff Turner: came [00:21:00] from listening to him talk about, you know, what, there are times when it's time for you to leave, there's time when it's time for you to help one of your team members leave, because it's just time. And he called it necessary endings. A guy named Horst Schultz was one of my favorites. He talked, he talked about customer loyalty. He was so good. He was from the Ritz Carlton.

yeah.

Fame and then a Capella. hotel group, Juliet Funt was a great speaker. That's the other thing about the summit that I loved every year. Somebody speaks that I've never heard of.

That And they're awesome.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: is. That's really great.

Jeff Turner: but it just goes on and on and on. And last year, John Acuff talked about soundtracks. I like it. And it's what's going on in your head all the time. [00:22:00] And changing your soundtracks so that you change your behavior.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: He's, he's pretty awesome.

Jeff Turner: So anyway,

Global Leadership Summit,

August three and four.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: August three and four. Yep.

be there. Be Square. Yeah.

Jeff Turner: And, and remember, everybody wins when the leader gets better.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: That's right. Wow. That's right. That's nice. I love that, Don, I think it's your turn.

Don Sherman: Yeah.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: To do some word association.

Don Sherman: Yeah. You've dealt with Ebony long enough Jeff. Sorry. Sorry about that. It's been the best hour of slice but's time for your reward. Do, do word association. I give you one word to gimme one word back. That's not wrong cuz it's your word. You ready? You

Jeff Turner: Ready.

Don Sherman: Leader

Jeff Turner: Global Leadership Summit.

Don Sherman: Success.

Jeff Turner: Individual.

Don Sherman: College.

Jeff Turner: WSU.

Don Sherman: Okay. Very nice. What high school did you go to? North.

Jeff Turner: I went to North High.

Don Sherman: knew that at least it wasn't Southeast. Hey, but That's cool.

Jeff Turner: where, that's where my wife

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: See, so, yeah. Well,

Don Sherman: I can't, I can't go [00:23:00] there.

Jeff Turner: like to say we, we went to different schools together.

Don Sherman: There you go.

Failure.

Jeff Turner: Inevitable.

Don Sherman: Entrepreneur.

Jeff Turner: Risk-taker.

Don Sherman: Wichita

Jeff Turner: home

Don Sherman: vacation.

Jeff Turner: What is that?

Don Sherman: Dunno

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: what? A vacation.

Jeff Turner: Hawaii

Don Sherman: Nice. That's funny. Hero.

Jeff Turner: Jesus Christ.

Don Sherman: Chamber.

Jeff Turner: Business.

Don Sherman: Family.

Jeff Turner: Important.

Don Sherman: Fun.

Jeff Turner: Golf.

Don Sherman: Last but not least, and you gotta tell the truth. Jeff. Beverage

Jeff Turner: Wine.

Don Sherman: Okay, we'll go with wine. Red or white?

Jeff Turner: Yes.

Don Sherman: Mic dropped. Excellent, man. It's [00:24:00] good to see you again. Thank you for coming through.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: We certainly appreciate you and thank you for being candid and sharing some of your wow nuggets with us.

Jeff Turner: Well, thank you.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: thank you.

Ton of nuggets.

Yeah. Thank you.

Jeff Turner: Hit the summit.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Well, friend, it's been a wild journey, Don. I mean, we've had like a lot of episodes together. Can you believe that?

Don Sherman: Like 140, I would've lost that bet. That's, let's see, 140, carry the two. That's two and a half years.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Carry the two. It has been a while, but I am so ex. Excited about the future of this podcast and where, where it's going.

I am proud of, you know, having the opportunity to sit next to you every week and interview all of these wonderful, wonderful people telling the Wichita story and telling their entrepreneurial story and how they're making our communities better. So, you know, I look forward to seeing what the Chamber does in their next steps and make certain that you all continue to listen.

Don Sherman: Please do and make sure you like us, love us, share us, follow us. For the last time.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: next [00:25:00] time, friends.

Don Sherman: Peace.