

Wichita Chamber Business Accelerator

Episode 134

Steve Dixon

Don and Ebony: [00:00:00] Welcome to another exciting edition of the WCBA, powered of course, by Evergy if you like to be on the list to tell your small business story, reach out to communications@wichitachamber.org. first, thank you for listening, and don't forget to like us love us. Share us. We truly appreciate it today.

We're excited to have P B Hoidale in the house. See, I'm excited to have my dear.

friends, Steve Dickson in the house.

Steve Dixon: Thank you guys. Thanks everybody. Thanks Don.



Don and Ebony: you bet. Would you concur with that good friend?

Steve Dixon: Absolutely. 100%. You

Don and Ebony: Okay. Well, Steve, Tell us a little bit about who you are and the company. you representing

Steve Dixon: I'd be happy to. So my name is Steve Dickson. I am the president and CEO of the P.B. hotel company

P.B. Hoidale is my great grandfather. That's how the company got its name.

It's you know, some people have a hard time pronouncing it, but Pete was a Norwegian immigrant

moved to the United States when he was 11 years old, founded his company. Well bears his name still today, 75 years ago,

out of his garage, he was a 50 year old person when he decided to take that leap of faith and start his own business.

75 years later here, we still are.

you

know, I took over running the business from my dad.

It's been

roughly about 10 years ago

now, but have been

Don and Ebony: working for Hoidale for about

Steve Dixon: 25 years. What we do, we build gas stations. That's the quick and fast little

part and piece of it, but we also service, those gas stations, but we also deal with fluid handling products for, for, a variety of industries.

So cities, counties, states,

private industry. Public industry, you name it.

anybody that's storing fluid on their site is probably a customer of ours in some way, shape or form.

Don and Ebony: Your Great grandfather started this business in his garage.

at the age of 50.

Steve Dixon: oh, yes.

Don and Ebony: I know. That's brilliant.

Steve Dixon: yeah, no, it's

still, it's still, you know, I think about it.

I'm, you know, I'm 52 years old right now. And so to think that he's had the.

wherewithal to start the business when he was 50, just to, you know, take a chance on himself. you know, it says a lot. That's one of the things I really admired about him. And I was fortunate

Steve Dixon: enough when we moved back to Wichita in the early seventies, Pete was still

around.

So I got to grow up with him, got to meet him, hang out with him,

learned a

little bits and pieces about the business from him. But it was really a lot of work with my dad, you know, later in life that, you know, got me really interested in jazzed about,

you know, joining the company

and being part of the.

Don and Ebony: the.

business.

How many employees do you guys have now?

Steve Dixon: We have roughly 60, spread throughout offices in Kansas and Oklahoma. We do work throughout the Midwest, kind of the core central

areas of Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, Texas,

and Arkansas.

Don and Ebony: a good amount of area that you cover.

And so how do people, they, how do people know about you?

I mean, they just know if they're going to build a gas station, we have to call PB Hoyts.

Steve Dixon: so that's a great question. So we have,

roughly it depends on the day between eight and 10 people that are outside sales people. So those that's the team that we're actually works and reports directly to me on a day-to-day basis.

and of course it doesn't hurt that we've been around for 75 years.

So we know the players we've been in the market for a long time.

But I do have a great external sales team. We have,

I, what I,

Steve Dixon: hope is a really good reputation in our industry, but I'm also part of a national trade association. So I connect with people across the country on a daily basis.

so we are working on projects from companies as far away as North Carolina to Alaska.

Steve Dixon: Just depends on who we're working with and what we're doing that day.

Don and Ebony: Just for those who are unaware. and really don't know much about the business. Can you tell us something unique about the business that people may not know?

Steve Dixon: I will tell you that it is a

great

career and it's a highly technical field. And so I think that as people look at our employees, especially our technical team members that are out servicing equipment,

those men and women are.

Steve Dixon: Highly proficient technical folks. They work

on point of sale systems. They work on network connectivity.

They pull and bring laptops to every service call they make. So they are doing work out in the hot

and the cold that

people, a lot of folks just sit behind a desk and do

you know, computer work they're out there in the field doing.

every single day. So I love the fact that our folks, you know, taking the time to learn and,

become proficient at

Steve Dixon: skill

sets that they didn't have 20 years ago. It used to be. I could, if I could turn a wrench

and I can change a filter on a gas pump, that's all I need to know how to do. And now they are again, making network connectivity. They're dealing with, PCI

compliance and EMV compliance issues. It's a whole wide range of different skillsets that our

teams had to learn over the last 10.

Don and Ebony: years.

So you provide that training for them, or what does that look

Steve Dixon: It's a combination of a lot of on the job. I have to see it to do it, to learn it,

but our manufacturing [00:05:00] partners also do a great job of providing

that assistance to us on a base level,

but really the bulk of what our folks learn is just hands-on working with mentors within the organization and just doing the work,

that helps them quite a bit to.

Steve Dixon: And really start to figure it out. So occasionally we have a little bit of a struggle people,

you know, it takes a little longer to do things than a, maybe a proficient senior level technician to learn how to do, but that new person, once they've seen it

done it, they pick it up and then they get to use it every day.

From that point forward,

Don and Ebony: So if I wanted to come over to the company

Steve Dixon: be awesome.

Don and Ebony: and

Steve Dixon: Start

Don and Ebony: cannot, let's get this situated. Now she cannot

Steve Dixon: that's okay.

Don and Ebony: level of tech skills. I mean, It's pretty subpar, but I'm pretty good

at anything, but I'm probably at the ground level.

You could teach me even how to be attack.

Steve Dixon: Now you're asking me personally. No, I could not. No, that's what I,

thankfully I have a lot of great team members that handle that part of the business, but, yeah, absolutely. Actually my preference is to hire folks that have very little background in our business, start at ground level. That way they get to learn how we do business.

They get to learn how our processes. Fixing things. it just works better that way.

I've had lots of team members that have come from other organizations

Steve Dixon: and unfortunately bad habits. And

the way you do things sometimes just doesn't translate to the way we do

it at a hotel

Don and Ebony: PB located.

Steve Dixon: So our corporate headquarters is just off of Harry in west.

So, yeah. And, we've been there in that location for, since roughly the mid seventies, started out on Elizabeth street prior to that,

the business really started to grow and branch out really about 19 75, 19 76.

Steve Dixon: That, so

that

the first

30, some years is in a fairly small organization, roughly about eight people.

Based

here in Wichita really did not have any plans on growing or expanding. And then once my dad came on board, he made the big push to say, let's put the foot to the pedal and get moving down the road.

Don and Ebony: And I remember seeing that sign when I was a kid it just said, PB

Hoya, Dale.

I didn't know what it was. I just know it was a different name. Do you know?

what was the inspiration of your great grandfather to say, you know what, I got this idea and I'm going to put my name on it. Cause it's that good?

Steve Dixon: Yeah. You know, it didn't have a lot of opportunity to talk to Pete about that. But I do know just some of the stories

that have been told throughout the, you know, the past, you know, especially talking to my dad part

of what it was.

He

was looking to leave a legacy. He really thought that this is, you know, building a business, starting a business, giving an opportunity to maybe bring a couple of family members into the business for a longterm was something he was really interested in doing. He had worked for other people for.

You know, the rest, all his life prior to that point.

And he was really looking for an opportunity to see what he could do and provide jobs to folks in a, that in a career based organization. So a lot of the folks that work with us right now have worked. We just had one person celebrate their.

Don and Ebony: 45th

anniversary with our

Steve Dixon: company last week. And another one was at 25. So we do have a lot of long-term folks. Hopefully, you know, I think Pete's legacy was let's build an organization that takes care of the folks, treats them like family and people

will stick around

and that's been the case so far.

Don and Ebony: That's a great segue. And I'm just trying to think, I mean, I'm an entrepreneur and I don't know

thing I would do and say, you know what I'm going to call this Dr. Sherman, that's it I mean, he does not PB

Dale gas, or anything cause it just PB

Dale. That's pretty. That's pretty cool. That's entrepreneurial ship at its finest.

You started talking about the culture As far as good people, tell us more about that PB Hoya Dale culture.

Steve Dixon: Sure. you know, really, we solidified a lot of that probably about six, seven years ago.

as part of leadership training class that I was in

Steve Dixon: really

started to focus in on

core values

and really

what

are the core values of PB Hoidale. And at that, by that point in time, we've had a group of people that have been there for a while. so what I did is I pulled together a group of team members. We sat down for two days, did brainstorming. The first thing we did was just talk about let's list any, and every idea that we have with words of what is, what is.

Don and Ebony: wholesale mean?

Steve Dixon: We started out with a list of 82 things. it got pretty long,

pretty lengthy, pretty fast. When you start crossing things out that are similar at the same, we ended up with a

final

list of eight core values, and we really try to, we post those everywhere. You'll see those coming out on our Twitter feed.

They go out on, you know, there are posters everywhere. You're you walk into any of our buildings. We have.

You

know, our business cards have 'em and really what we're working on is training all of our team members as they orient in. So I sit down each one of our new team members and go over those

core values just to really emphasize the [00:10:00] importance of

who we are and what we do.

And those core values are really the guideposts that help us make decisions. Anytime I have a hard decision or one of my exec team

members

comes to me with, Hey, I'm really struggling with this, trying to figure out what I should do.

We

go back to a core value and say, okay, are we in violation of that value?

Or if we make this decision, are we in violation of a value? And that just helps us to keep centered and focused on the things that are most important to the company and to our team

Don and Ebony: community quality, integrity team. And reliability.

Steve Dixon: thank you.

Don and Ebony: Excellent.

Steve Dixon: impressive. That website

does a good job.

Doesn't it?

Don and Ebony: kind of sounds familiar a little bit, sorry.

Steve Dixon: would hope so. I'd hope

so.

Don and Ebony: the energy thing. How far is your reach? You started on Elizabeth and now you're on at west street since 1970. How far is the PB Hoya They'll reach across the country, across the country, across. the world.

Steve Dixon: So I would say, you know, again, really in this core central Midwest area,

you know, starting here in Kansas and kind of spreading out to

all

of our contiguous states, anything that's, you know, close by really anything that I can get to and be licensed in.

That's one other part of this business that, that there's a little bit of

a

bar that has to be crossed and I have to be licensed to do some of the work we do, because it is relating to public safety.

Don and Ebony: fuel.

Steve Dixon: And so we have to make sure that the work we do on the devices we work on, they're calibrated correctly, that people are getting the fuel that they're supposed to be getting,

but

there's also a huge safety component to that.

And we have to make sure that the work we're doing is put in correctly and is licensed,

or that our team is licensed to do that work in each state that we're in. So really this core central group of states is where we will operate.

Steve Dixon: Now

I have sent team members all across the country to do work,

for special projects, one-off type scenarios for whether that's for a special customer

or

for one of our manufacturing partners that needs us to go take care of a problem for them.

Don and Ebony: Excellent. One quick question. Your great-grandfather apparently knew about entrepreneurship. Like I think it's just pretty cool. He put his name on it and that was it. I mean, PB. Figure it out,

Steve Dixon: that's it. Absolutely.

Don and Ebony: what is your definition of success as an entrepreneur?

Steve Dixon: No,

I think it's a great question that, and I'll answer this in two ways. So I think

that

my definition of success for the business is to be able to provide these jobs to people, to make careers. And because I take a lot of responsibility, like I said, that name means a lot to me because it is our family name.

so there's a lot of weight that goes along with that.

Steve Dixon: Yeah.

You

know, it was able to do his thing, but now once you're now a

third,

fourth generation owner that bears a lot of weight. And so, you know, there's that, but it's also the responsibility to our team members. You know, one of the things that I really I guess drives me and

what pushes me is to make sure that each of our team members has the opportunity to go home at the end of the day, hopefully a little happier, a little better than they were when they came from. We don't always

succeed with that. There's hard days,

but

we want to make sure that they've had the opportunity to earn a paycheck, to be able to pay their bills, but to also hopefully advance a little further along the road that they want to in life.

whether that's

Steve Dixon: paying

for a kid's

college

education, whether that's paying off a house, buying a new car, whatever that is, whatever

success looks like to them is what success looks like to me.

I really want our team to be.

living their best life at the end of the day. Now, for me personally,

Steve Dixon: you know, really my entrepreneurial

experience is more in the nonprofit world here in Wichita.

I've

helped start a couple of nonprofit organizations here, one focusing on prison re-entry ministry,

and one is called lead Wichita. We put on the global leadership summit every year.

And

for me there, it's more about giving back.

You know, community is one of our hotel key values. And the real reason that it is is that we recognize that our company operates within a committee. And that

the

community is our partner. You know, they provide us employees, they provide

us places to work.

They provide us opportunities for jobs, but at the same time we have to give back, it's not just take there's, there's gotta be give back too. And so, you know, as part of that, from an entrepreneurial standpoint, it's how do we build these organizations to give back at a high, at the highest level possible,

into the Wichita community or the Oklahoma city community or wherever it is the world?

Don and Ebony: Excellent. That's deep.

Steve Dixon: Top of mind.

Don and Ebony: I mean, it's, That's pretty dope. to hear someone who's at the top of the business, as the president say it is important for us to give back. And it's important for us to build these infrastructures in ways so that our, our, our people can give back. I can give back.

and, you know, it's a return for both.

So, thank you for all of that. And your work in that. But you said quite a bit in those last.

two responses that, I mean, you know, As my day job, a Part of my role is to promote [00:15:00] and support

industry development, right. For companies and communities throughout our service area. And a lot of that is, like you said, through jobs, creating jobs and things like that, and retaining talent and helping expand. So you mentioned that and you've been a third generation.

owner. What scares you about all of that? As you're moving into the.

Steve Dixon: It's

that's a really, you know, so I don't like to use the word scared, you know, very rarely I don't feel as scared about anything concerned. You bet. Right. And

I

think that the biggest concern I have right now is being able to develop.

Don and Ebony: talent,

Steve Dixon: not only at Hoidale, but locally as well. We want to make sure that we are having thriving communities,

where we operate.

Steve Dixon: But

you know, our biggest challenge right now is yeah, I have, I believe eight job openings

across all of our branch offices and different opportunities for folks.

And

while we're willing to train somebody.

Don and Ebony: It's really

Steve Dixon: Connecting our company to the person looking for the right person, that's looking for a job,

you know,

Steve Dixon: and then also understand that this is a career opportunity.

It's not just a show for work

punch the clock

Monday through Friday, but you really have an opportunity if you want to

take

it on to. Build yourself. Nice career. So one example,

I have that, The, young lady that works for me that is, does my accounts receivable started a wholesale as a secretary, probably the best way that she answered the phones and did filing it's now completed her business degree at Wichita state is,

you know, at the top of her department right now, And is looking for other opportunities.

And as people retire, she'll have more opportunities within the company, hopefully to move up into our executive C-level team at some point in time. And that's the kind of opportunities we want to have, have people that are interested in

those opportunities, they exist.

we just need to find the right people

Steve Dixon: to make, to fill those spots.

Don and Ebony: Well, Steve I have another question for you before, we go on break, Because you know, we have to hear from our sponsors as we do that. You've been in Wichita for a number of years. Have you, and under your leadership in particular with your fathers, has there been any thoughts about leaving? the Wichita community?

Steve Dixon: Never.

No, never.

Once I, you know, now I will tell you

that when I started a wholesale, I start, I started along with my sister, our Kansas city operation.

So we were fresh out of school. I had spent a year out in great bend, being a lawyer,

loved the

job, didn't leave the location. And

so my dad had offered the opportunity to move to Kansas city and try something

that. My

sister and I had not thought of trying if we jumped at it. and so I would tell people then, yeah, maybe, you know, I like Kansas city.

It's a great space.

The company there

is growing. We've got a lot of opportunity there, but after I had the opportunity to move back to Wichita that door, I said, no,

we will never leave Wichita. There's nothing that would ever cause us to want to leave Wichita. I love this town and I'm invested in this town.

I don't see any reason to ever move from this town.

Don and Ebony: That's awesome.

well, friends we'll be back. It's now time For us to hear from our sponsors, and we'll be back with more with Steve Dickson PB. Welcome back friends. We're here with Steve Dixon from PB Hoya, Dale we're, hearing and learning. about his story. So Steve, tell us why is your

Steve Dixon: service like important?

Don and Ebony: Why do we, why do we meet you?

Steve Dixon: That's a

really

good question. And we, we had to answer that question a lot over the last year and a half to

a lot of folks. You know, when we look at the end of the day is we talk our team about, we are a critical infrastructure company.

if we don't do what we do, there's a lot of things that don't work well. you know, the city of Wichita is one of our big customers. So if we don't keep their fueling systems moving

Steve Dixon: their firetrucks, don't. The

police cars don't

roll

that. So just vital infrastructure pieces for the city are important, but we also do a lot of work for hospitals and other, other organizations that have generators.

There's

a lot of fueling systems that go there. [00:20:00] So if the fueling system doesn't work at the hospital and the power goes out, there's. And

we don't want that problem to happen.

And so

that works vital.

But when you look at the other part of it is when we will found out really last year was

the

importance of moving product from point A to point B, whether that's to a grocery store or to a hardware store, wherever people are needing products to carry on their daily lives.

Those

semi trucks do not roll on.

Don and Ebony: peanuts

Steve Dixon: And

so making sure that the infrastructure is there to support their efforts and

the

logistics of moving

goods

and services across the country is important.

And so I, my team gathered a new found.

Don and Ebony: a

Steve Dixon: Spirit last year of how important the work they do is when they

saw, you know, how medical supplies, PPE has to get to from a, to B and when gas isn't flowing or diesel fuel, isn't flowing, it's really hard for that to happen.

And so,

Don and Ebony: I didn't even think about that. And you are correct. Like I would be so upset. if it was unable to get my Amazon packages up and down the street to my house.

So Thank you.

Steve Dixon: I'll let the team know that. Yeah.

Don and Ebony: really appreciative of. And, I think as our friend, Tessa, mentioned, you know, she doesn't want to have to go inside of the gas station. to pay. you can just pay right there.

and you do that as well. Right?

Steve Dixon: Absolutely.

That's really where the technology of our business really focuses on is on payment side, whether that is credit cards, debit cards, tap to pay with your phone, coming down the road, biometrics, whether that's an eye scan or a fingerprint

or a chip reader, or barcode scanner, you name it, all

that is coming or is already here.

And

so payment is the part where the technology and our business will really start to take off.

Don and Ebony: So Steve, You, as you mentioned,

earlier, you're very involved in community and nonprofits. you seem like a well-read person. What are some of the thought. leaders that you admire?

Steve Dixon: So one of them we heard from actually the chamber,

brought them, John Mackey in earlier this year to talk, John Mackey has been an inspiration for me for a long time

Steve Dixon: talking

about in his, basically his book of conscious capitalism is it was a journey for me in terms of learning a little bit more about how to be a conscious leader of a business, talking about the fact that there are not just.

Ownership

stakes, but there are stakes for the community stakes for the employees, stakes for the customers, and trying to find ways to create wins for everybody in a transaction, as opposed to a zero sum of IFI when you must lose

scenario.

And that didn't,

that influenced the way we run the business, but it all also influenced the way that we were active in the community as well.

it's one of those

Steve Dixon: when

you are running a non-profit or working for a non. Too often, we, we look at it as, Hey, if I get money, you don't get money. And we really got to work together to say, how do we collaborate together?

Utilize

whatever pools and pots of money. There are in the community to solve problems and work as a collaborative team,

as

opposed to, competitors.

We see that you see that in the work we do with the United way a lot.

And then the other person that I really admire is guy named Bob Chapman. Bob Chapman wrote a book called everybody matters.

That

really is influenced the way I lead my team.

It really talks to me about the idea of

how

do I, through my leadership, help our team

again,

go home at the end of the

day

in

a better state than they are when they showed up.

You know, can I, I, want my goal is to when that person goes home to their family. I want them to be in a good mood. I don't want their work at

Hillsdale to be the cause of,

you know, a

fight

at home or just being grumpy to the kids or whatever, kicking the dog. I wanted it to be, Hey, I had a good day today,

you know, and that's going to help to give me energy.

When I get home to do the things I need to do

as

a husband, wife, child, whatever,

you know, to make that situation better.

Don and Ebony: That's awesome. Do you feel that your community work fuel sheep?

Steve Dixon: oh, absolutely.

my wife, Julie will tell you that she can tell when I've spent a day or part of a day, especially the end of the day,

doing non-profit work or just community based work that really raises my energy level quite a bit.

which is why most of those means are in the afternoon, because it's a great way to, to kind of push through some of the. Slower time in my day,

Steve Dixon: as you know.

So it does a prize, a great deal of energy. It's just fun because you get to see people that are either impacting people's lives. You get to see people whose lives have been impacted,

or

you also just get to work with some amazing groups

of people,

that are bring equal energy to that post.

Don and Ebony: I have a question for you

and I you know, I'm interested to hear this one in particular.

What do you think your personal brand is?

Steve Dixon: I have never really given that a whole pile of thought.

I,

Steve Dixon: you know, new to social media pieces, I've recently started a Twitter account
[00:25:00]

because

of my,

because of prompting from my friend, peanut horror over at United way, it says, Hey, you know, we really need you to be,

you know, pushing stuff out, liking the stuff we do have a, he is that's his thing.

And, I've learned, you know, my brand at the end of the day.

really

what I wanted to be seen as, I guess my personal philosophy of life is

more.

It's not about me, it's about what I can do for other people and helping lift other people up than it is who I am. You know, my name is not attached to something, but it helps somebody else out.

Something that I've done is helped somebody else out. I'm perfectly fine with that. And so, you know, to me, brand is personal brand is not that important. I love the company brand being out there because that's how I get paid, how I put my kids through school. But at the end of the day, it's really about, you know, the work that's getting done.

The people we're helping out.

Don and Ebony: I liked that. And I liked that, you know, it's not about your personal brand, you like the company brand. How do you separate the two? Right? Because you, this is your family. business. do You find it difficult to, to separate yourself from,

the business and be your own individual?

I think I've been doing a much better job of that recently or the last probably four or five years.

you know, as I get a little bit older,

Steve Dixon: the

kids have gotten older.

Don and Ebony: and they have

Steve Dixon: Divergent interests.

it's, I've began to realize that

I need, you know, I had to spend more time at

home or with the kids, just creating life experiences that are,

you know, important for them.

whether that's trips, whether that's just being there to mentor, being there to,

Steve Dixon: you know, provide advice, whatever that is. You know, when I was a young person, I could work.

You know,

15, 16 hours a day. It was nothing to do that. It was fun.

I had, I enjoyed that, but realistically at the end of the day,

you

know, my legacy

will not be, will it be somewhat the work that's done at Hoidale? Hopefully it's more than the work that's being done here in the community, but it's also going to be through my kids and the people that I, you know, just my friends that I

get to hang out with.

and

just

being a person that can be there for folks and and help provide direction, help provide. That's really what I want it to be about.

Don and Ebony: Excellent. And I truly appreciate you bringing up. think it was a couple of questions ago but you brought up

Steve Dixon: up

Don and Ebony: It doesn't have to be, I win you lose, and I I truly appreciate you doing that because, I mean, I feel the same way. I mean I feel a good deal. Isn't a good deal. And That's both parties. felt they got a good deal.

I mean, that's, I truly appreciate You bringing that up. you don't wanna hear that much,

It's like, it's got a thank you. I mean that, thank you very much for saying

Steve Dixon: welcome. And I would say I, yeah, that's a, that's a philosophy that, you know, we want to continue to push as far and as broad as we can,

because

you know, that was the old school mentality

is that, you know, I've got to get mine and if I get mine, you can't

Don and Ebony: have

Steve Dixon: Right. So, but that's not the way the world works today. It doesn't work well. That way my younger team members have done a great job of it. Show

me and explain that. But at the end of the day, you know, my dad always used to tell me it's not a good deal, unless both parties walk away feeling a little

POM.

really, I think what I wanted to do is make sure we flip that

exactly. Right.

And so

we want to that

really

just

frames

all of the interactions that I have with people anymore

is

looking for wins for everybody, making sure. Yeah. You know, we may not be all super happy, but at least we got something that,

that was helpful

Don and Ebony: excellent. been around 75 years. Is there anybody?

local, business or entrepreneurs that You take inspiration.

Steve Dixon: I have a really great, small group of friends that I've worked. We meet together

once a month and then get together quarterly for brainstorming strategy sessions,

learning

more about business, learning more about really what it takes to be a leader. I think it's really more a leadership group than it is anything else.

And those guys have pushed me harder. Than I've ever been pushed. I think

in

my life, even though the business is doing well, things, you know, I've got a lot of stuff on

the plate. There's

always more, and

it's it's always the encouragement from that group of guys to say, Hey,

you

know, what are you doing today?

What are you doing next week to get better?

and

it helps. They're highly motivated folks. So you, when they set the bar high, you just gotta push hard to get there with them.

Don and Ebony: Excellent. one more quick question.

You've been around 75 years. I love saying that because, I mean, I'm still back on, I'm going to put my name on this. You don't know what it is, but PB Hoidale, but, You've been around 75 years. How would you like to see The Wichita ecosystem business ecosystem evolve. Even more than it has.

Steve Dixon: Sure. I think that, for me,

it's just a continued diversification. you know, I love the fact that we are the aircraft capital of the world. That's really cool. And that's something to hang our hat on,

but

at the end of the day, I love to see that this entrepreneurial spirit that you know, came from my

great grandfather, came from somebody, other businesses that were started here in Wichita to really [00:30:00] regenerate itself.

And re-expand to see folks that are out there starting businesses. Because again, that helps to diversify what we do

helps

diversify our workforce, helps bring people into the, into our community, into our economy.

That's

what I want to see. You know, I'd love to see just more entrepreneurs. Rolling up their sleeves, getting ready to do the hard work that it takes to get the job done.

and then flourish, you know, just take off and go because that's, what's all about,

Don and Ebony: excellent. I'm sorry. I think I lied. I got one more question. So don't side-eye me. Just Let me ask my question. And you mentioned this about entrepreneurship.

Steve Dixon: Do you

Don and Ebony: I feel that we lost our way for maybe a generation. and we're trying to come back.

Steve Dixon: Absolutely. Yeah. And so,

you know, it's, this is something that I talk about with a lot of different groups I talk with is that I feel that

my

generation, that gen X somewhere along the way, I don't know what it was about us.

You know, why, you know, we didn't, we missed our, sometimes we missed a little of our leadership opportunity.

We either

we didn't step up or

maybe

the generation ahead of us held on a little too long. Don't really know

what it was.

and I think that. We're getting that swagger back. I mean, as being driven by folks that are younger than I am, which is something that I love to see,

Steve Dixon: and I have no problem jumping in and helping out, you know, and again, I don't have to put my name on it as long as I lift you up and supports you in whatever you want to do.

so I think that's coming back. Absolutely.

It was

there a period.

Yeah. I think we kind of took our eye off the ball

and

we've failed to realize, you know, what the infrastructure here

in Wichita. As far as entrepreneurship.

And

really now we're celebrating that all over again. We're seeing people that are getting out and starting businesses, that places I love to go visit here in town,

you know?

And you're like, wow, this is really cool that you started this. You took the time, you took the effort to make this out of nothing. That's pretty cool. And I'm loving to see where we're at

and where we're going.

Don and Ebony: Excellent. I truly concur with that. So do I, And, you know, you mentioned the infrastructure that we have. And this may be,

like a really long question, but is there something missing from the ecosystem to continue to build?

up those entrepreneurs and allow them to thrive here?

Steve Dixon: Yeah, you know, I would say if anything,

what

I appreciate is that we have realized, I think where we are falling short,

you know, I know that the team at 2, 5, 9. Just

go and work

in a hard heart

to

help our kids

get

trained up the skills that they need to have.

I mean, it's the

stem education. It is the, you can do things that you're not, everybody has to have a college education.

I love watching what's going on at Wichita state tech,

Steve Dixon: not

every kid. Destined for a four-year college degree and that's okay, because you can still be highly successful. I have my vice president of operations does not have a college degree, but yet he worked, he learned, he fought to to get to where he is and he's doing a great job.

And I think there's a pathway for people. And that's what

I want to see you. People understand that they have a pathway to success. That's not always tied to a four-year college degree. and I, so

I, what

I'm looking at is how do we make those connections between those kids that are coming out of high school right now that have graduated and companies like holy Dale, you know, they see big opportunities here, there, and everywhere, but.

Again, I know what I pay starting, and I know what I'll teach you. And I know that you could have

a career and it's really

figuring out a way to make those connections better. I think. And there's a lot of small business out there that is really craving for those people, but we're having a hard time making those connections because people see the bigger employers and just

default.

so yeah, trying to find a way to make those connections to small business or to entrepreneurs that are

needing it. Get help.

Don and Ebony: well before I turn it over, you know, you're three generations in, is it going to be a fourth generation?

Steve Dixon: So I laugh only because you know, when I was in high school, I would tell everybody would listen. Heck no,

I worked at ,you know, for every summer, every Christmas break, whatever said, there's no way in the world

I'm going here. There's no way in the world. This is the job I want to have. we'll see. Yeah, We'll see. we've got one in college now.

And one just graduated from high school. Next spring. They've

got skillsets.

But, you know, there it's early yet at this point in time.

Absolutely.

What I love to see it. You bet.

I mean, this

is a great business. they're great kids. I'd love to have a chance to work with them just a little bit.

We'll see how it goes.

Don and Ebony: Wonderful. Thank you for that.

Steve Dixon: Yeah.

Don and Ebony: Excellent. Well, the hard part is done this fun time. We're going to do word association And, I give you one word. You gave me one word bag. It's not wrong Cause it's your word, right? Here we go. Leader

Steve Dixon: sacrificial. Okay. College

fun

Don and Ebony: beverage.

Steve Dixon: Coca-Cola

Don and Ebony: entrepreneur.

Steve Dixon: That's Pete,

Don and Ebony: ah, chamber

Steve Dixon: support,

Don and Ebony: family [00:35:00]

Steve Dixon: heartbeat.

Don and Ebony: hero.

Steve Dixon: Jesus

Don and Ebony: Nice fun

Steve Dixon: trips.

Don and Ebony: Excellent. Truly appreciate you coming through. Nice to meet you for the first time.

Steve Dixon: Don was really great to meet you too.

Don and Ebony: Well, friends we've come to the end of our show. Hard time with our friend Steve Dixon. Steve, thank you for being here. today.

Steve Dixon: Thank you. And he was great to sit down with you and Don for just a little bit.

Don and Ebony: Yes. I'll make certain that you like the podcast. and that you share it And leave

comments and let us know who you'd like to hear from next until next time friends. Peace.