

Hello and welcome to our Good Place Podcast that is run by good place innovators. A team of researchers, educators and student fellows passionate about transforming communities with an extra sensitive eye for our place, local context and through community needs. Our project focuses on the notion of entrepreneurial embeddedness, the emotional connection to our places. And Co creation of value with our communities. My name is Radka Newton. I'm a senior teaching fellow in strategy and innovation at Lancaster University Management School, Education service designer and elite of Good Place Innovators project. Funded by the Enterprise Educators UK. In this podcast we have debated the notion of codesign with our communities in order to create better entrepreneurial solution for our places. We discussed leveling up agenda stigma of sometimes stuck places and we also debated the civic commitment of Lancaster University to its place today we welcome our local entrepreneur and the longest university graduate Peter Harrison, who setup FPGA security right here on the campus in as a student initiative to me, Pete is a true good place innovator with place and people in the heart of the business. Pete welcome. It's great to have you here. Thank you, Erica Pete so you know you are such an inspirational entrepreneur for us and the story of the company starts right here. On the compass in Lancaster. Where did this inspiration come from and you know what? What does this place? Lancaster? What does it mean to you? This once the first part of the question as to why we started, so I was a student, I was studying mathematics. Initially I actually graduated in management science and changed halfway through, but really it was seeing a gap in the market. So door supervisors or bouncers as they were formerly called. Very behind the times to what what I expected people the the students of today would not believe what.

would deal with back then and
there wasn't a culture of safety
or there wasn't much training.
It would be common for a door supervisor
to go to work in jeans and Tshirt.
No uniform and there was no licenses.
They'd meet a few hours before
with the colleagues and have a
few beers before they started.
They could still be seen working with
a beer in *** in the other and
they'd react to a lot of problems.
And the actual nail in the coffin was a
student event at failed College in ,
where Dorsey Supervision Company
were former security company was
hired in to provide the security.
There was an incident and one of
the students got badly injured
by one of the bouncers.
They were employed to keep them
safe and sometimes people will
drink too much and they will be
getting a little bit of algae bargy,
but it's not the the door.
Supervising all the bouncers
job as it was then to be judge,
jury,
executioner and decide I'm going to
give you a good clout they did and that
was years ago that student touched.
Ended up with a broken femur
and he didn't deserve it and I
said we can do better than this.
Who wants to come with me and founder?
A group of fellow rugby players
from the university all said, well,
we'll give that a goal as well.
We could be polite and friendly
and smile while we do this.
The rest is history,
so you were really people focus
at the time you probably saw it.
You were a student at the same time as well,
so you had that passion for for the change.
Yeah, yeah.
And we we formed with a a set of
values that stand with us today
that the mission statement keeping
people safe and one of our three
values is looking after the team.
So making sure we paid people
fairly and correctly,
which wasn't occur in years
ago where when a lot of the
security companies were run by.
Gangsters,
essentially they take bits off your pay.

There's some stealth charges
for uniform for insurance if
they needed to make more profit,
we'll just give everyone a pay cut.
They'll still go to work and
you're really managed that stuff.
Change of the industry.
You know where that stuff?
Yeah, I think it was one of the
innovators the second generation.
There's many more like you know
across the across the UK.
Yeah, and you know what?
What is it like stuff to have to
have a business here in Lancaster?
And I know one of your first
clients was also the Council,
wasn't it?
So you're very locally based?
Yeah?
So the very first customer really was
Lancaster University Students Union.
We did a good job on a couple of
extravaganza parties and they said to me,
look, would you like to come and run
the security at the student union?
The sugarhouse so it's a great start.
The Council was a customer,
maybe a year later.
Lancaster City Council
and the place Lancaster.
I mean, it's it's got everything.
I spend a lot of time
traveling around the world,
but also a lot of time in London,
Bristol, Leeds, Manchester,
Liverpool, Birmingham.
But Lancaster's you know it's got a
great campus here and the facilities and
the talent within the university is is,
you know,
one of the best in the world.
And you also,
in a really idyllic place with the coast,
the canals, the countryside,
half an hour to the Lake District.
Yeah, I mean it's it's amazing.
It's the probably one of
the constraints for us.
Now is it's small and we can't find
all over the pool of people here to
do everything we need to do so we've
had to expand to other larger cities.
So you are really,
you know you're passionate
about Lancaster and you really

you are located here.
Your headquarters are here and I wonder,
you know with your with the growth
of the company when you're thinking
about your strategy of the company,
do you take the place of your
company into consideration?
As well, are you thinking about
your impact on the place?
Yeah, I mean we, we've toyed with
moving over head office at times.
We've got multiple offices.
We're in the UK now, London,
Birmingham, Manchester.
Lancashire operations and one
of the reasons we kept the head
office here was the the rent is
good but also the the talent that
we can get from the university.
So we've for example,
got a budding finance manager who
actually started as a steward,
progressed to being good door
supervisor at events and then
came through a little bit of work
experience came and got a job as
the junior finance manager and you
know he's he's moving up the ranks,
just completing his ACCA.
Exams after kind of first in finance or
Lancaster University and talent like that,
and that's one example.
There's multiple within the office
that have come through the through the
ranks myself and a fellow director both
got awarded over MBAs from Lancaster as well.
So we're sort of here to stay
where I choose to live as well,
and where I choose to put my
girls into school.
So you are a true local entrepreneur
for a speed and you know,
we always sort of.
Try to think about how we encourage our
students to understand the place and for you.
As an entrepreneur,
I wonder when you meet maybe
other business people.
Are they also really thinking
about the success of the place and
how it links to their businesses?
What is it like in that community
of entrepreneurs?
I think less so nowadays and
COVID are a big part on that.
There's a lot of businesses out
there that can be done % online.

When I'm in London,
sometimes it is easier just to say.
Where do you live? Near Scotland?
You know up north and employ
a lot of people in London.
And when the team from London
go to Cambridge,
they'll tell me they won't north.
So we are small on the map, but it is.
It is important.
It plays a part in our history.
We we try and do as much as we can here.
We're involved in lots of local initiatives,
from sponsoring several of the
university sports teams over the years.
For example, to help it out.
With local charities,
local sports fields that we've
donated things to over the years,
it's you know being part of
the community is important,
as played some way into protecting
our reputation over the years as well.
In security,
you can't always keep everyone happy.
Unfortunately,
people do,
for instance,
get too drunk in the
nightclub and need to leave,
and sometimes they don't want to
and you can either make a friend.
An enemy out of them,
but when we've got a lot
of local support and
I do think in Lancaster,
we have not just up at the university
but within the local population as well.
We've seen as being the good guys.
You are such an own brand,
you know that whenever we go out,
always look out of FHT and we feel good.
You know, we feel good to see.
See your brand around.
We feel that yeah,
we know that you are really,
you know your guys are really well
trained and I wonder also with your.
Team, I know that you support them
a lot in training and development.
You've also developed a lot
of courses for the industry.
How do you encourage them to be mindful
about the place in the same way that you are?
One big thing for us is linking.
our values and our brand promises.
We've got brand promises and one

thing we'll say to our customers
is we have the best trained team.
If you employ yours,
I guarantee you there will be no
other security company who can
put a team as highly trained as.
Also you will have more first
aiders on your site.
Will have more people than
experiencing crowd management.
So in fire procedures for example,
and those that value and that brand promise
needs to ooze through our organization.
So when we recruiting we were
asking people and taking an
interest in existing qualifications.
When we are appraising people,
we're looking at what up skills
have been done in the past year.
We were a bit of a learning
organization ourselves,
so every single salaried person,
for example, gets % of their
salary to spend on CPD per year.
We employ a whole host of fulltime
permanent trainers and academics.
You know,
ahead of learning and development.
For example,
she's a doctor and she got
that PhD here at Lancaster,
and there's several other
people in the organization,
and it's a rite of passage to go
from a supervisor to a manager.
You will spend some time being a
trainer in the classroom first,
so merging the that learning
culture across your organization in
appraisals and reprimands and having
good well kitted out classrooms
which I know the university is,
is perfect for play a large part in that.
So it's it's mainly we talk
here mainly about that stuff,
societal impact and your people.
People as as good dividends for you and
maybe it's hard to for listeners to imagine.
Is there any environmental
impact of your organization?
I mean what one thing I can say is,
you know,
depending on what context we take,
environment is and we've had an awful
lot of people come through the ranks.
FGH security spent some time with us.

and they've left to go into the police.
It's happening more and more
the other way around nowadays.
And people are leaving the police to join us.
But and and some of those police have
gone up through the ranks there as well.
You know, that makes me very proud
to know that they started their
policing journey here in FH security.
And it's the same with the military
and the same with the ambulance
service and the fire service.
As well, quite a lot of transferable
skills from one to the other.
Speaking about the environment,
I mean we we take sustainability
and our green credentials
credentials very serious this.
So we've got an environmental
management system,
ISO , and one for any of the
anyone interested in environment
and that extends and we we measure.
For example,
there were CO produced by our vehicles
produced by the lighting in the office,
and we do things like old uniform comes in,
it's washed.
The logos are removed,
it's shredded and it goes into.
Customers furniture and that
customer of ours not mentioned them,
but I know they supply most
of the university furnitures.
There's a good chance if you sat
down at Lancaster University on a
comfy seat in within that seat you
may have some treated shredded,
really nice clean former.
Uniform from from FGH.
Security. That's fascinating.
I would never think about
this sort of example.
We we offset.
You've got a lot of electric vehicles.
We've put a fleet of electric
vehicles into a contract in London.
And from a financial point of view,
that was a great decision,
but also for the for the environment.
And we've also offset a lot of our carbon
by planting trees with the Woodland Trust.
And we got a choice with Woodland Trust.
Where do you want to plant them?
And of course, we said,
let's go as close as we can to home.
That was Keswick,

.

so maybe miles north of here
and I think the next step for us would
be to look at our own woodland,
which we'd love to give something
back to the community in Lancaster.
Some form of nature.
Orchards or something like that
where we could be planting trees,
it's I think it's trees per
ton of carbon that we've planted.
trees will offset one ton of
Carbon over a year period,
so this needs to win every single year.
So if anyone's got space in
Lancaster and they want more trees,
we will let you know.
We will let you know.
Yeah,
my team will fund them for you.
But you know this is really fascinating
for me to have this debate with you,
because when you think security
company you don't really think
and I think you truly demonstrate
that sort of circular economy,
how it can be done locally in the
local place and you've grown.
So much as well recently and I
wonder what's the transition been
like from a local company to now.
We are a global company and you
are a global player.
Yeah, you know, it's to be honest.
It's logistical.
Challenge I got into work this morning.
Quite excited because of
my team and a lot
of managers are just back from Portugal and
need the help with a few jobs this week.
And but then I had a call from Australia.
I've got a team who were meant to be flying
out next Tuesday and they said oh by the way.
The flights got cancelled.
We find them out on Sunday and that creates
a logistical challenge because they were
deployed in an event until this Sunday.
We then had a management meeting
and we talked about jobs in Saudi
Arabia later in the year and jobs in
Qatar and when one place is busy
and others quiet some of the time.
But other times everything can
all come at once.
We don't employ many local people,
you know, got a couple of people in
in Amsterdam who look after the the
Under Armour store there for example.

But yeah, it's you find yourself,
you know, to negotiate and deal
with the Under Armour contract.
We're speaking to people in America.
And so you can find yourself,
especially in my position during
negotiations or top level conversations.
Or sometimes we need to have a meeting
at o'clock in the morning,
sometimes o'clock at night.
And that's one of the problems
with with global business.
Yeah, and it,
I suppose it's going to be a challenge,
maybe even moving further with your
growth about how you transfer these
local values that you've built here.
You believe so so strongly in how you
take them to your global ventures.
Yeah, yeah.
But this stunned, true, you know,
one thing we've seen.
We do some very big jobs and.
When we we fire team out to Saudi Arabia,
for instance,
we can train up to local
security in one day and this is the
first training they've ever had,
so we really do feel when we we go
and do that we are upskilling a
nation and we're setting a culture
of keeping people safe in a in a
country that's really going through
some big changes at the moment.
That gives us a nice warmth as he
feeling when we when we get home.
Win that we've taught them something.
Last time I was out in Saudi Arabia was
for the F earlier this year in in February.
Now Saudi Arabia's never
had a crowd surfer before,
so we had to teach the local teams
that you could get a crowd surfing.
We had to demonstrate and show them.
This is what crowd surfing is
and then show them how to look
after that crowd surfer safely.
So I'm hoping that we're not
just introduced crowd surfing.
So Saudi Arabia, but we'll, we'll see,
yeah, but be well, well, what?
Story you know, and who would know,
or who would imagine that a security
company is a learning organization
and I'll take you up on this
because we sometimes debate with

our local entrepreneurs here.
What would it be like today, job swap?
And I wonder,
you know, you you've
experienced the university,
you've done your bachelor degree,
you did your MBA here.
If you imagine this sort of education
that we provide to our students,
how how can we improve this?
What do you think entrepreneurs of today?
Neat, I think you're very academic
and that's that's universities
for you and sometimes academics.
You know it's great and
great to have that knowledge.
Great to be able to teach someone
how to find information and find the
answers and the theory behind it.
The reality is I've had people first
class graduates rock up on day one
and can't send a proper email,
so a simple answer would be more
work experience. And I know I didn't.
Exceptional time with yourself
on work experience on a placement
in another industry and actually
connecting to industry more with
placements with work experience,
open days,
even if it's just short sharp snippets
and what I really value when I'm
looking for new employees is people
who've done a little bit before and
understand the difference between
learning academically and working
in a office management environment.
It's a great example,
and I think that's hopefully you
know we're trying to bring more
experiential learning to the classroom,
and we can see,
you know this is really important to us.
To, you know,
acknowledge what you are saying.
What many of our business leaders
have mentioned to us.
So prepare our students a bit
better for the future.
Yeah, Pete.
Well,
it's been fascinating to
have this debate with you.
We're coming to an end of the
episode and I just want to ask
you a bit of a personal question.
What is your personal place?

Where do you feel happy?
So I think of all the things
that I do because I've I've got
aware several different hats,
including helping up at
the university sometimes.
But I'm also a trustee at
a great local charity,
cancer care and I'm an active reservist
with the Royal Marine Commandos.
Have been for years,
but I think personally serving others is
is probably where I sit serving my team,
for example.
But I have to be busy.
I have to be building something.
Love change,
love a bit of disaster management as well,
love the adventure and business
definitely gives us that.
So yeah.
So I,
Jalen moving forever so this
has been an interesting answer.
Nobody has really thought about
place in this small conceptual
way like you have just done.
So thank you.
Paid for that.
Well,
thank you so much for your time.
It's been great having you with
us and thank you for inspiring
our students to be more practical.
And open minded.
Committed to the values as well and
committed to their place of business.
And that's all for today and
I hope you enjoy our debate.
Feel free to drop us a message,
comment or recommendation of a resource,
initiative or idea for our
project and until next time
take care.