

JANINE

Rajeev, welcome to the very first recording of the IDEA START podcast.

RAJEEV

And welcome to you too, Janine. Can you believe it? It's really our first recording today.

JANINE

It's such an exciting day. We've been thinking about this and planning and consulting it. And here we are in our studio for the first recording.

RAJEEV

That's correct. So, what's this all about?

JANINE

We should start there, shouldn't we? Well, I think the vision for the IDEA START podcast is this opportunity to talk about all things creativity, all things innovation and all things entrepreneurship and ultimately in the process, I think what you and I are both most excited for, is this idea of building community.

RAJEEV

That's correct. And, I think it's very important for us to note that, the IDEA START podcast is a new channel, but it's not necessarily a new space for UM. So, you know, the, the podcast will essentially extend on a legacy of supports and entrepreneurial action from our institution.

JANINE

That's a really good point, Rajeev. Thank you for raising that. I think that's something that we're both quite excited to do with this podcast, to share with the audience the faculty, the staff, the students, alumni, parents, other institutions that have already been engaged in this entrepreneurial space at UM. So why don't we start there? Who are some of the important players that we'll get to know in the podcast?

RAJEEV

No, that's a great idea, I think. And let's start with the Stu Clark Centre for Entrepreneurship.

JANINE

Yeah.

RAJEEV

I think they've been doing some great work at UM, and they have been around for 25 years now. They are the leading support for students, with any ideas in entrepreneurship and innovation. We then have the technology transfer specialists, what is now called as the PKMI. That's the Partnership, Knowledge Mobilization and Innovation office.

They help our researchers with, get anything to do with licensing, with patents and for industrial collaboration. Then we have some of our faculties, right. And they have taken lead, for example, the Faculty of Science. They have their Innovation Hub and they support entrepreneurship and the faculty. We can also, I think, talk about some of our entrepreneurial alumni.

They have gone out to build great institutions at Manitoba. We should also talk about some of our external partners. You know, don't forget that, at the SMART Park campus, we have North Forge, and we have Futurpreneur. In fact, North Forge is the leading incubation provider for technology and science startups in Manitoba.

So, we have quite a lot of support, as you can see. And I'm sure going ahead we'll feature some of the leaders on our podcast.

JANINE

Yes. And of course, we also have scholars in the discipline of entrepreneurship. And, faculty and instructors outside of the business faculty who are teaching these skills as well.

RAJEEV

Well, I want to pick up on, something that we spoke about earlier, and that's, the community space, right? And that's so important for both you and me. And, you know, we are both really committed to kind of building this community here at UM, and to share with this community and connect in a real, meaningful way.

JANINE

Yeah. It's something that you and I have talked about since the beginning, right? And I think this temptation, there is this sense sometimes, that entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial thought and action, that it's easy.

RAJEEV

Yeah.

JANINE

And I think you and I both know that it's not. But what makes it easier? You know, is being connected with others for the purpose of learning, for the purpose of support. That that can be so crucial to success. So that's a real, I think, guiding principle, for you and I in developing this podcast.

RAJEEV

Totally. Yeah. And I think at this point, it's important that we ask why you and I.

JANINE

Yeah. Why you and I, I suppose we are the relative newbies on the front of U of M, but I think it does show this growing commitment by the institution, in this space. And so, I work within the Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning. It is a support unit for all the faculties and colleges at the university related to teaching and learning and doing that.

Well. And, my specific title is, Faculty specialist for Entrepreneurship. On first hearing, they think, why does that belong in a teaching center? But the idea here is that at the university, since our founding, we have really been engaged in experiential learning. And that's an area where we can continue to grow.

And some types of experiential learning are more known if we think about maybe like co-op or, labs where we get to like practice or clinical settings, where we get to practice. But entrepreneurship is one of the types of experiential learning that we recognize at the university. And so the idea is that by engaging in entrepreneurship, by solving real world problems, learners can develop these really important competence and seize for their future.

And it's a future that's complex and, changing very quickly.

RAJEEV

I agree. Yeah.

JANINE

Yeah. So, it's this idea of like learning through entrepreneurship and helping, faculty and instructors, embed that kind of learning. And then aside from that, we also have faculties at the university who are interested in providing more opportunities for their learners to learn about entrepreneurship and to learn for entrepreneurship. And so, I'm really delighted to be here and delighted to play my small part in this work at our very large institution.

RAJEEV

This is great idea, and I'm sure. What about you? Yeah. I'm sure that we are very happy to have you here, by the way. And, as far as IDEA START I think IDEA START is, as you know, a very new initiative at UM, and it's part of the vice president, research and international office. And, you know, the idea with IDEA START is to kind of build a culture of entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity and, to amplify the supports that we already have.

RAJEEV

Think of it as, hop on, hop of bus. Okay.

JANINE

I like that.

RAJEEV

Yes. So, if you are a student or any other member of the, community, you could be faculty, staff, alumni. And if you, let's say, are curious about entrepreneurship or you have an idea about entrepreneurship, you can hop in and find out what are the supports available and we can guide you to the supports.

And then you can hop off, maybe if you take a break and you want to come back and then work on your idea and want to, you know, build a startup of some kind, and then you can hop in back again and, will again help you. And if there are any gap in the ecosystem, the idea is to try and identify those, fill that up, make and build new partnerships, not just in, Manitoba, but also look at building partnerships nationally and globally and, hopefully build, what we call as the global entrepreneurship highway.

JANINE

Okay. Well it's fantastic. Well, I know it's very early days for sure, but we're excited, for the impact that ideas start will bring to the, community as well. Maybe before we go any further, could you just share a little bit about yourself and, and what you're bringing to the university?

RAJEEV

Sure. Well, before I joined, I'd start. I am a newcomer to Canada, and, I was in Bangalore in India leading a tech incubation program called the 10,000 startups. It's essentially India's largest incubation program. And I used to lead the Bangalore region for that. Prior to doing that, I have done three startups of my own, two in education technology, one in hospitality, and, I've also worked in corporates and, leadership roles in India and in UAE.

I have led investor relations, managed services, angel networks. So, in many ways, you know, all my experience I'm putting to use here at IDEA START and I'm, very excited because I've never worked in academia before. And I'm super glad that I have our, director, Moses Levy or Mo Levy, to lead this initiative. He, as you know, is, alumni, himself is an, alum.

And, incidentally, he got the, Lifetime achievement award. You know, last year for his contribution and, he's, well known and established name in this sector. And, between him and me, we are both very excited to, work on this initiative. And, why don't you tell us something about your background?

JANINE

Yeah. For sure. Well, like Mo, I'm an alum of the University of Manitoba. I studied at the Asper School of Business, and I majored in entrepreneurship. And, international business. And I really thought that my future was going to be in leading an entrepreneurial venture.

RAJEEV

Really?

JANINE

Yeah. In fact, during university was my very first foray into it. I started a business, teaching piano lessons led by competitive advantage at the time was that I would drive to the family's home. So, I eliminated that, that driving piece for parents. But shortly after I graduated, I started with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) as an advocacy organization for small and medium sized businesses, exclusively small and medium sized businesses here in Canada.

And, it was a joy. It was a total joy. It was a wonderful decade that I spent with CFIB. And, as things go, sometimes I, you know, you just need a change. And, after about after about a decade, I moved to Red River College Polytechnic, to teach entrepreneurship and, a bunch of other courses in business administration.

And I just got to tell you, I kind of fell hard for teaching, teaching and learning became my jam. And, just an area that I really wanted to continue to focus on. And so, when I saw this opportunity at the university, I wasn't really looking for a change, but I thought, wow, like to bring together these two pieces of my career journey would be quite exciting.

And so, I'm very happy to be here and, to be contributing to, as you mentioned earlier, a legacy of good work and, and, and moving that even forward now into the future. One of the things I have to say during that kind of interview process and onboarding process that's made me quite excited about the work that we're doing at the university, is President Benarroch's vision of entrepreneurship.

Shortly after I started, I had this opportunity to interview him, and he talked about entrepreneurship as 'a willingness and an ability to make an impact'. So, he was talking about like the mindset part, the ability he was talking about like a set of skills. There are some things that we can learn, but then to make an impact and we had a real robust discussion about what that means.

And of course, we can start new companies. We can create jobs, we can have new products and services. And like, those are amazing, wonderful things for our economy and for our communities. But we can also recognize impact in other ways. Like we can be solving social challenges, environmental challenges, making real impact for a community. And so, I love that, the focus is broad of the work that we're to do.

RAJEEV

Like I couldn't agree more. In fact, that's something that really excites me as well. And this, whole idea, that we are not here just for profit technology startups. So they are, like I said, great too. Yeah, but we are here also for supporting, social entrepreneurship, you know, for example, in fact, my first startup was a social entrepreneurship.

JANINE

Oh, really?

RAJEEV

Yes, in education. We are also here to support, for example, indigenous entrepreneurship. And I think that's very important considering our context here in Manitoba and how important it is to support indigenous entrepreneurs. We are also here to, support, any kind of nonprofit ideas, for

example, by just for profit, right. Any ideas essentially, that have, potential for a positive societal impact.

JANINE

Ideas to impact.

RAJEEV

Ideas to impact.

JANINE

That's a good tagline. Love it. Wonderful. Well, I think, you know, as, we talked about kind of the power of entrepreneurship in this broad way. We are, though, an educational institution, and we are about equipping learners with, the skills, with the knowledge, with the attitudes, that are necessary for success in this, in this domain.

And so, we have lots of curricular options, of course, and they're very good. We have lots of co-curricular opportunities as well. And I think our audience might know it more as like extra curricular. So, maybe not the things you're doing for your degree, but other workshops or just learning environments that help to build other skills and, and I'd like to kind of position this podcast in there that, this is just one more tool to be building these skills, for the community and with the community.

RAJEEV

Totally. Yeah, yeah.

JANINE

So today is the first day of recording the IDEA START podcast. I'm going to ask you a really hard question. Okay.

RAJEEV

I'm all ears.

JANINE

Yeah. Like, I want you to, like, imagine it's like, five years ahead. How would you describe this podcast?

RAJEEV

Okay. Let's see. I think, you know, I would be very happy if you would have achieved the community piece. If you could have built that vibrant community. That's very engaged with the podcast and that considers the podcast to be very authentic, you know, and it's a source for not just knowledge, information, but also, as inspiration and considers this as a great place for, insights into anything that is got to do with entrepreneurship and innovation, at, and beyond.

JANINE

Yeah. Yeah. I have to tell you, you've I just kind of threw in a little teaching and learning thing there, right? Because teachers always like to start with the end in mind, right? Like, what do we hope to achieve? What do we hope our learners can do? And, and I couldn't agree more with, the things you identified, in entrepreneurship education, we often talk a lot about iteration.

And this idea of focusing on getting started instead of being perfect. Because when we start, then we get to iterate, we get to learn. We get to incorporate the feedback that we're getting, the validation that we're getting, and then get better.

RAJEEV

Right. Absolutely. And that's our philosophy, you know, with the podcast. And, if we waited it to be perfect for example, I think we wouldn't have started.

JANINE

Yes, exactly.

RAJEEV

Yeah. We would still be waiting. So, we genuinely look forward to, learning and iterating and going ahead, with this podcast. And, for the audience, I would like to say that, if you have any feedback, please share that with us. Tell us, what kind of, people you would like us to call and invite in our podcast?



What kind of topics would you like us cover? And, any kind of feedback and please mention that in our comment section and we'll be very happy to read those and work with you in making this podcast better as we go along.

JANINE

Yeah. That's great. Thanks, Rajeev. Well, to our audience, welcome to the IDEA START podcast. Welcome, welcome. Let's get started and then let's get better.

RAJEEV

That's good. Thank you so much, Janine. And look forward to building this podcast with you.

JANINE

Yeah. Same here. Thanks, Rajeev.