

TRANSCRIPT: **CODY CATALENA** **INTERVIEW**

Mr. Cody Catalena · Chief Executive Officer of NetNearU

TRANSCRIPT

An interview with Mr. Cody Catalena, Chief Executive Officer of NetNearU. Catalena is a 1997 graduate from Texas A&M and an inducted member of the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry.

This video was posted November 19, 2014 on the Tyrus R. Timm Registry YouTube Channel.

Could you please introduce yourself and tell us a little about your career?

Absolutely, the name is Cody Catalina, class of 1997. I graduated with an agribusiness degree from the College of Ag, Texas A&M, and started an internet business my senior year at Texas A&M, and we grew that company over the last, gosh, I guess it's been 14, 15 years now or longer and recently sold it and now are continuing to, to grow it as a division of a larger company.

Could you tell us a little about your experiences at Texas A&M?

Absolutely, at Texas A&M it was... I grew up in Bryan-College Station, so Texas A&M kind of ran through my blood all the way from probably being just a small child going to the games before I even knew I was at a football game, but my freshman year was in a dorm—in a dorm on campus, Appelt Hall, and I dove right in. I built bonfire freshman year, went to a lot of the campus events, silver taps, basketball, baseball football, every, you know, everything, a lot of clubs, and things on campus. So, living on campus really kind of helped indoctrinate you into the campus life, and just had a great time, you know, pulling out specific memories is probably a little hard to do. I guess, one of them that kind of influenced my career, my business is in our freshman year when we walked into our dorm room. The people in the dorm were asking us to sign a petition to get internet access in our dorm room, and my roommate and I at the time looked at each other said, "What are they talking about internet access? What is internet? What is the internet, and what is Ethernet?" and so we politely declined to sign the petition, but three years later I graduated and started an Internet company, so that's how time has changed in that short period of time.

Can you describe your early career?

Sure, my early career, started the company my last semester at A&M. I think I took a lot of hours my last semester trying to graduate. I was probably taking 21 hours, starting this company NetNearU, and it was called PayNet at the time, though we changed the name a few years later to NetNearU, and early in that company's life, we saw a lot of hard times that we went through, 9/11, with the dot-com crash, raised a lot of money and different... in difficult climates but continued to grow the company over time and really did that through the great people that worked here. You know, we heard a lot of great people at the company and persevered, and I got to the time, you know, later in our company's business where the economy was growing, our business segment, our market segment was growing, and our company grew with it.

What advice do you have for students of Agricultural Economics?

Advice I have for students in ag economics is to just, you know, work hard, meet great people, and surround yourself with great people, and try to balance, you know, life and work. You know, it's a hard thing to do, but I would say that's the number one thing. It's just you.. your work ethic, your honesty, and then the people you surround yourself with.

How were you able to manage time for family, work, and other priorities throughout your career?

Yeah, so that's probably one of the most difficult things probably, and these... in these interviews I would imagine a lot of people say that that's one of the most difficult things. When you're growing a company where you're in another career, especially, you know, early on... well, all the time, even now, and you have a family I've got a wonderful wife, two kids. We've, you know, really been blessed with kids who liked to do a lot of things, we like to do a lot of things, and I don't think one of the things that my dad always told me growing up is "work hard and play hard", and so we try to do that as well. You know, work hard when we're working, but then when it's time to do things that are fun we play hard as well, so that you, know, includes kids sports, school events, vacation, whatever it may be. You know, we take time for all those things, and that's that's just as important as anything else.

In your opinion, what does it take to achieve success?

What does it take to achieve success? There's probably a hundred different answers to that. You know, I think... I would like to think that I'm successful, we've grown a great company, and I've got a great family

Mr. Cody Catalena | Transcript

Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry | Department of Agricultural Economics | Texas A&M University

and career. I think it just takes hard work and determination, and there were a lot of times when, out with a friend and said "Golly you know we're gonna make it through this" and, you know, I think you gotta persevere and really, you know...you know, just, just... kind of get your way through it sometimes.

What are your thoughts on being selected to the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry?

Sure, being selected for this honor registry is just that, an extreme honor. You know, there a lot of great people that are part of this registry. It's pretty unbelievable when I was first contacted, and, you know, I was kind of in a little bit of disbelief, I would say. Like, you know, "There's no way they're, you know, calling me for this," but it's just a tremendous honor. Even just being around some of the people in the registry for just, you know, a short period of time now that I've been involved with it has been, has been great, and it's just an unbelievable honor.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

I think the only thing else that... all I'd like to add is just really a thank you, I guess, to, you know, the people that do this registry, but also to my professors when I was in school. Dr. Joe was a huge influence on me in the College of Ag when I was there. Being an Agribusiness degree, I've kind of bounced back and forth between professors from the business school and the College of Ag and now it's really a testament, I think, to Texas A&M that, you know, professors in both colleges were great. I had a professor in Finance 341 that was a great influence on me, and I really enjoyed that class. I don't know a lot of people who'd say they enjoyed Finance 341, but it was a good class. But, just in general, you know, the Texas A&M University College of Ag and the College of Business did me a great job

Mr. Cody Catalena | Transcript
Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry | Department of Agricultural Economics | Texas A&M University

Transcribed by
Isabella Garza
June 23, 2020