



Founders Story

The search to find a better way

Looking for a better way to do business has been key to the success of OfficePartners360. And as the founders explain, this has defined their entrepreneurial journey for over three decades.

Standing in the pouring rain on a roadside in the north of England in the late 1980s, a truck pulled over and presented Tim Boylan, an American exchange student in the UK, with a choice. "I had been hitchhiking from Scotland and wanted to get to Cambridge," he explains. "But the truck driver was going to London, so I changed my plans because I had to get out of the rain."

It would prove serendipitous because, once in the capital, Tim went on to meet what became his long-term business partner and collaborator, fellow American David Highbloom.

The Human-i-Tees

Human-i-Tees was an early Social Impact company that made T-shirts with an environmental message. Every T-shirt had a revenue share with school clubs and environmental groups.

The business model saw school clubs sell a T-shirt for \$14. Roughly \$5 would go back to the school, and the remainder went to Human-i-Tees to pay for the shirt, the shipping, the contact center, and the business.

This revenue share fundraising model would go on to be wildly successful, raising over \$80million for school clubs before they sold the company in 1999.

"All the messaging was about saving species, living lives focused on conservation and reducing our impact," explains David. "They were all beautifully graphic."

"We were entrepreneurs and hustlers, but we've also always had a charitable side and always believed in giving back," says Tim.

And as they became more experienced, learning from other companies along the way, Tim says they realized it was possible to combine environmental action, social justice, and profitability in running a business.

"We've always tried to focus on how the business is going to impact the staff and surrounding community positively," Dave explains. "Sometimes we fail, and other times we've hit it out of the park. But the T-shirt business is where it all got going."



Business driving positive change

Both had been active on their university campuses in environmental and social justice campaigns. They'd had jobs from a young age and were involved in soup kitchen work, greening the campus, and securing investment in recycling infrastructure. But, most importantly, they shared a firm commitment to making business work better to improve society.



Raising over \$80million for school groups

Both were rooted in a 1990s youth culture shaped by globalization and environmental concerns. From this, their first social impact business was born. Human-i-Tees sold environmentally-themed T-shirts to raise money for young people and local community projects.

