

# **INNOVATION CONVERSATIONS A SIT-DOWN WITH TOM PATTERSON AND ERIN FUJIMOTO: TOMMY JOHN CO-FOUNDERS**

PRESENTED BY

ENTREPRENEURIAL STUDIES PROGRAM  
NESS SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT & ECONOMICS  
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

NOVEMBER 8TH / ORPHEUM THEATER-DOWNTOWN SIOUX FALLS

1:30 DOORS OPEN

2:00-2:45 TOM AND ERIN KEYNOTE: BECOMING BIG BY STARTING SMALL:  
THE SCALABLE APPROACH TO DISRUPTING AN INDUSTRY

WITH NO PRIOR EXPERIENCE IN CLOTHING DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING, TOM PATTERSON AND ERIN FUJIMOTO SOUGHT TO REIMAGINE THE FABRIC, FIT AND FUNCTION OF MEN'S AND WOMEN'S UNDERWEAR TO CREATE A MORE COMFORTABLE AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTION. THEY FOUNDED TOMMY JOHN DURING THE 2008 RECESSION WITH THE HUMBLE GOAL OF BRINGING A SOLUTION TO MEN'S ILL-FITTING UNDERSHIRTS TO MARKET. TOMMY JOHN WENT FROM A START-UP PRIMARILY FUNDED THROUGH BANK LOANS, A 401K AND CREDIT CARDS TO BECOMING A DISRUPTOR BRAND CHALLENGING A SLEEPY INDUSTRY. 15-YEARS LATER SINCE THE BRAND INTRODUCED THE WORLD'S FIRST PATENTED UNDERSHIRT WITH A STAY-TUCKED GUARANTEE, TOMMY JOHN HAS ATTRACTED CELEBRITY LOYALISTS, LIKE KEVIN HART AND HOWARD STERN, SOLD OVER 20 MILLION PAIRS OF UNDERWEAR, IS SOLD IN OVER 3,000 WHOLESALE LOCATIONS, AND EVEN OPENED SEVEN, SOON TO BE EIGHT OWNED RETAIL STORES. HUSBAND AND WIFE ENTREPRENEURS TOM PATTERSON AND ERIN FUJIMOTO DISCUSS THEIR JOURNEY SCALING THE TOMMY JOHN BUSINESS AND HOW THEY REACHED OMNICHANNEL SUCCESS BY STARTING SMALL.

2:45-3:30 COFFEE TABLE CONVERSATION

A PANEL DISCUSSION: CRAIG SILVERNAGEL AND BARB HELLER WILL FACILITATE A CONVERSATION WITH TOM AND ERIN, BRIDGING THE TOMMY JOHN NARRATIVE WITH REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES OF PURSUING NEW VENTURES BY FINDING PROBLEMS, TAKING ACTION, AND FAILING PRODUCTIVELY. THROUGH THIS EXCHANGE, TOM, ERIN, BARB AND CRAIG HOPE TO HELP DEMYSTIFY THE PROCESS AND JOURNEY FOR ASPIRING ENTREPRENEURS.

3:30-3:45 ATTENDEE Q&A

4:00-5:30 SOCIAL AT STARTUP SIOUX FALLS