

INTERVIEWER: So, thank you Greg, I really appreciate the time. So, as I said my wife suggested that I come and speak to you just because of the business model and the staff turnover and stuff, so my research, and my research topic is around the effects of immigration on medium sized entities. I have obviously

5 got an idea, you know I am in this sort of corporate space you know, where you have got lots of ideas and stuff. Christy mentioned St Peters to me, and I was that is actually quite a good starting point in a sense that you have probably got quite a dynamic work force, in a sense that they are all skilled. Well, I would

10 imagine 90% of them are skilled in a sense that they are teachers, but also the effects of your customer base, also in terms of immigration. So, if I can just sort of get it started with introducing obviously myself, I am currently doing an MBA at Gibs and this is my first research project, I am not an academic by any means. So, I am really sort of out of my comfort zone here, so the idea is that I will be interviewing about 10 or 12 heads of entities who are faced with these

15 challenges. The idea of the research is to come out and effectively ,I am basing my research around the brain drain theory, and the effects of the perceived brain drain on small to medium entities. I think that what my research has told me thus far in terms of reading journals etcetera, is when you dealing, in corporate space you have got far more financial means to lure and keep people.

20 So, professionals like the accountants, financial analysts, those sorts of guys, the big banks etcetera, have the financial pull to say, listen City Bank, in the UK, is, will be willing to pay you, X will do a match that type thing irrespective of the exchange rate etcetera. But what the literature tells us is that you now operating in this space, where you are not only competing with, St Peters is not

only competing with St. Stithians and St David's, they are competing with a Korean school who is calling Australians and all of those sorts of things. So, you have now moved into this global space where you are competing on a global scale. So, the hope of the research is to get out of the people that we

5 are interviewing, on what are some of the processes that they have been through. So, when somebody walks through and says Grey, I am resigning because I am immigrating ,is it a case of is there something that the, you the entity can do and/or the country can do to retain talent. Because I think that is what every bodies fear is that with this brain drain in South Africa, firstly, is it

10 real and secondly, the literature also tells us that there are some positive effects in the brain drain, in that I think my wife is actually one of them, where you go you leave the country but you come back, and you come back with this wealth of knowledge etcetera, and all of this experience, you are investing in the country but there are people that basically get on a ship, and they do not come

15 back. That is basically where the country and the company will, you know the effects are clear, so yes, that is the sort of thinking along the lines of the immigration. So, from your side Greg, your, sorry I have just got a list of sort of guiding questions. The plan is that you just talk. I suppose it is our job to try and extract data out of the conversations. So, Greg, from your side just sort of

20 an overview of the staff compliment in terms of skill set, so is it in line with the assumption that it is 90% skilled, or what is the sort of makeup of your staff, and your staff turnover, is that a problem etcetera?

INTERVIEWEE: Okay, so we have over 220 staff, and of those faculty actual teaching staff just over 140 probably closer to 150. So, those would be certainly skilled staff.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Yes, okay.

5 INTERVIEWEE: Staff turnover here do you think I am loud enough?

INTERVIEWER: No, you are 100%.

INTERVIEWEE: Traditionally has been quite low, so around 5% or lower on an annual basis people tend to stay. They leave because they retire or because they get promotion elsewhere, and on rare occasions we terminate for poor
10 performance or whatever it is.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

INTERVIEWEE: So, yes, so it is pretty stable, it has ramped up a little bit high in the last three years, because there has been immigration or semi-gration to Cape Town.

15 INTERVIEWER: To Cape Town yes.

INTERVIEWEE: In two cases it has been the attraction of the cost, or the remuneration of an overseas teaching job, so, it is they both were white, and they got their jobs before their husbands did.

INTERVIEWER: Hmm.

20 INTERVIEWEE: But they moved because of the uncertainty in the country and because of the crime. So, there was very little that the school could do, the, I think there is something that the school can do, you are absolutely correct in that we cannot compete financially, and we do not try to. Unless there is something specific that the teacher wants a promotion post, or something like

that that we feel they are ready for, and we would like to give them that. We can do and that has worked on one occasion but generally the factors, the push factors are the uncertainty in the country, and the crime and so on. So, there is the pull factor for people to come and work here, which sometimes has a strong effect, so that is that our school is very different from other schools, in that it is not authoritarian teachers are empowered. There is a very strong feeling in the ethos that the standards have to be high, so it is a double-edged sword many people will not teach here because they have been hurt, they are afraid. Recently in two interviews applicants have gotten up in the middle of the interview when they saw which way the questions were going, and what was expected and left, and said sorry, this place is not for me.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

INTERVIEWEE: But teachers who want to teach like that they come here.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

INTERVIEWEE: So, for them it is much harder to leave because those who have gone to other schools overseas, then they reflect and communicate and say what it is like, a lot like here. We have not had anybody return, we can definitely say they wanted to return but we have returning South African's and your point is absolutely right the experience they got overseas has been.

INTERVIEWER: Do you see the effects of that experience?

INTERVIEWEE: You do. Yes, you do, because they teach much more than the way we do, so we do not teach in a traditional way where we tell our product is personalised education as far as we can. Every child is an individual, teach them in the way that suits them best, it is like we have not got it 100% right, but

that is the way we do. Whereas everyone else is curriculum based, today we are doing fractions whether you like it or not, it is happening at 09:00 in the morning whether you have got a headache, a hangover, tough.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

5 INTERVIEWEE: So, the thinking overseas although they do not have it yet, they do not have it right, yet is more in that direction especially in British schools for example and some Australian schools.

INTERVIEWER: Yes --- yes.

10 INTERVIEWEE: So, when these people come back to us, when we employ them, we employ them because we can see that a part from other things and because our teaching, I suppose like any company has got something different because it is so different, and unique we need champions.

INTERVIEWER: Hmm.

15 INTERVIEWEE: Because we are continuously training the staff, and we are continuously telling them to raise the bar, so if you are going to teach I will give you an example, if you are going to teach fractions you may not just say, okay today we are going to do fractions. We are having a party, here is a pizza, 14 oaks are coming, how many slices. You have to give choices, some kids are not interested in pizza. So, maybe you are going to do it with a packet of
20 marbles or anything.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

INTERVIEWEE: You are going to do it in Minecraft, so you are going to establish a neighbourhood, and if the rental on each business or each property

is so much, how many, what fraction of all the neighbourhood must you own in order to generate an income, so you have to offer choice.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

5 INTERVIEWEE: So, for some teachers that is quite a lot of work when you start prepping, so we need champions who keep pushing that, and so they learn from them, so that has a huge impact on us and that is probably our biggest risk apart from income loss through immigration of parents.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

INTERVIEWEE: If we lose those key people.

10 INTERVIEWER: Yes --- yes, and the immigration of your customer base is a real factor?

INTERVIEWEE: It is but fortunately we have not been impacted as much as other schools, I do not know why, I do not know, I have a suspicion that our income base of the school if you take the number of affluent schools in Jo'burg and group them together, let us say boys schools, St Johns, St David's. Girls schools Rodeen, St Mary's, [unclear] I suspect our income base is possibly stronger, the number of high, the percentage, the proportion of high income individuals within the whole community, is possibly slightly higher than theirs.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

20 INTERVIEWEE: Which shocks me but Covid has revealed that through a number of people who ask for the discount when we offered the rebate. The number of people who have asked for financial assistance.

INTERVIEWER: Yes --- yes.

INTERVIEWEE: But it is sending quite a strong message and then we also know anecdotally about the other schools, because people talk.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, of course.

INTERVIEWEE: So, the schools that are regarded as rock solid financially and
5 have a long history and pedigree not in the same financial shape as we are.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I would imagine that this pandemic has exposed quite a lot you know, in terms of people's reserves and their general business management I suppose. So, that would come up, and Greg just in terms of monitoring the, your competitors on a global scale, I mean you guys are
10 obviously, I mean it is widely known that you guys are at the forefront of education evolution I suppose. Is that because you are constantly monitoring what is happening in the world areas that advanced and sort of thing I mean are you, you must be in touch with what is happening in Scandinavia, you know do you try and keep up so to speak or lead?

INTERVIEWEE: So, that is, you have hit the nail on the head. How do we do it, yes, by keeping up, so we track modern research on any aspect of child development and often adult development. So, it would be things like motivation what motivates people, it is how do people learn, how do you encourage and reward peak performance and so on. So, it is not all child based
20 so we keep in touch with some universities, we go on overseas conferences, we have links with some schools. We make sure we go on a range of international conferences.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

INTERVIEWEE: Not all education.

INTERVIEWER: Yes --- yes --- yes.

INTERVIEWEE: You can limit yourself there as well.

INTERVIEWER: %.

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. Then we keep in touch with other schools. Then I was
5 going to say something else, when a teacher comes here no matter how good
they are, we have embedded the research-based teaching methods into our
practise. So, it takes training to get them that way, so no matter how good they
are, they still have to come here, and they still have to learn and be motivated.
So, I will give you an example of a very simple little technique, when we expect
10 our staff when they ask a question to ask it, and then to say wait not, you know
some of the hands go up. Wait and count in your head 1 2 3 and they must tell
the kids that is how they operate, because that allows everybody to engage.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

INTERVIEWEE: Because some of us are quicker thinkers than others.

15 INTERVIEWER: Yes --- yes --- yes.

INTERVIEWEE: Then we say to them now you do not pick the kid, you then
say discuss it with your neighbour, and then two people share what they think is
the answer.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

20 INTERVIEWEE: Then we say okay, how many know now and then more hands
go. Then we say okay, turn around and talk to the pair behind you and see
what they say.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

INTERVIEWEE: That is what we push.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

INTERVIEWEE: It is a powerful technique, if you just ask the first kid the kids that regard themselves as slow disengage, because they know the teacher is going to ask Bob, because they always ask Bob.

5 INTERVIEWER: Yes.

INTERVIEWEE: So, they do not even bother.

INTERVIEWER: Hmm.

INTERVIEWEE: Their perception of themselves is reinforced, but if you do it like that you force them, now he has to talk to his mates, and often you will find
10 he did have the answer but his self-esteem is so low he thought, I am too thick to know this.

INTERVIEWER: Yes --- yes.

INTERVIEWEE: So, that is a powerful technique, but most people teach the way they were taught at school, so you have got to hammer them before they
15 get that right. We are not a corporate where we say, today the policy changes if after 12:00 you are not doing it ,you are going to get fired.

INTERVIEWER: Yes --- yes --- yes.

INTERVIEWEE: So, we do a tremendous amount of training and we spend more than any other school including the high schools on training. So, we do
20 not always bring outsiders in, we do a lot of it ourselves. But it is keeping in contact you know costs a lot of money.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

INTERVIEWEE: So, when we lose somebody it hurts.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. Greg do you guys, I suppose it is difficult from a discrimination perspective, but you know when somebody does come in for a job or a job interview, is it noted around whether that individual is the breadwinner versus not. So, you mentioned earlier about the two instances
5 where they were white, so in essence you sitting there pretty helpless because you are not going to be able to say to them, guys you know if you are going overseas for money, we cannot compensate you in that sense. So, is it of your staff compliment can you kind of ,I do not know if you have got the date off hand, but I mean can you say 50% of them are the breadwinners in the family
10 or the 50% are wives, or you know is that something that you could as a suggestion could monitor going forward? You know you have obviously created, and it is widely known, you have obviously created a high performing culture as you say, but a good working culture.

INTERVIEWEE: It is widely known.

INTERVIEWER: So, it is a case of you have less chance of somebody who is a breadwinner looking elsewhere, because it is a good environment to be working in, because they are motivated, they are encouraged, they are noticed so they are getting all this fulfilment. So, they are not going to look abroad whereas you have got a toxic environment, toxic is probably a harsh word, but you have got
20 an unhealthy environment where you know it is not very well managed. Somebody might go on the internet and go you know, teaching posts in Australia you know. So, is monitoring whether the person is the breadwinner or not, a factor and/or, would you place a lot of emphasis on your immigration or your lack thereof, because you do I would imagine, fall into a minority pool

where your staff turnover is low, and the immigration is low, or the effects of immigration is low. Is there something you can, would you attribute it to the performance and the culture that you have created?

5 INTERVIEWEE: That is a good question, I am not sure. Because people's final motivation for immigrating is often different, the thing that pushes them over the edge if they become victims of crime.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, that is a big one.

10 INTERVIEWEE: So, we have never, I really must consider that we have never considered looking at who are breadwinners and who are not, and we should do that.

INTERVIEWER: It is, could potentially be an interesting metric to monitor because you also do not want to go into the space where somebody comes into an interview and is like, I am the wife you know. Because then you go into that discrimination space.

15 INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

20 INTERVIEWER: But it certainly is an interesting, I would imagine it would help with planning to say listen guys, we are in a bit of a vulnerable spot here because we have got, 70% of the teachers here are wives or husbands who are not the breadwinners. Which does make it more susceptible we have had a situation just by you know, why I am doing this research is our business that people leave for immigration, and in fact it was the wife who worked for Woolworths who got transferred to Sydney. He was one of our up and coming guys, he was one of our high skilled guys who was going to take over the Cape region for us, and it was all planned. But you got you know, the classic Mike

Tyson everyone has got a plan until they get punched you know, so that is the situation. Is to say if we I suppose not in our case, but if you had known that 70% of your staff is not the breadwinner, perhaps you are a little bit more at risk to immigration, should you not have a high performing motivated culture but you do have that. So, that is probably your buffer or your protection against that. But yes, so maybe an interesting metric to check out.

INTERVIEWEE: We need a little bit of time.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, okay. Look I must say though Greg in terms of what you have divulged is valuable information for me, and it certainly does come in my mind and I will fill you in on the insights once I have finished the data. But I am obviously hoping to get data from different types of businesses. But, I would imagine by the end of this thing you will be in a minority space where you are not that impacted by immigration, which I am also hoping to get a bit of through this research, I am hoping to get a bit of clarity for my sake. Obviously, you know with being a white male with two young boys here, and a wife here, what is driving this research is immigration, and whether we should be, whether we are in the right space, not for us because it will be a sacrifice for us either way as in myself and Christy, it is for the boys. Is immigration in this country particularly for white males or white families, is it as bad as it is around the braai. So, when people are talking around the braai it is everybody is leaving, everybody is ducking, there is no place for white oles, there is no place for this guys we have got to leave. So, I am hoping that the data tells me something different because, I have reached out to a few people, you know are you willing to take an interview because I am seeing the effects of immigration, and they go

well we have not really had anybody immigrate. I am like okay, so where are all these people immigrating, that when we stand around the braai you know there is ex amount of families leaving. You know that is the classic statement this many families leaving which is a ridiculous statement in itself, because how big

5 is a family. What is you know so, I want to try and get some clarity on that to say guys, the reality is that there are not that many people leaving? I am not saying that the reality is that not many people are leaving, so the small medium size space and of those that are leaving, there are quite a few that are coming back. They are bringing knowledge, and the other point was around the

10 phenomena called, where South Africans will settle in Perth for example. That they are still constantly investing back in South Africa, like Durban and the Indians is a big one. You know Durban is the biggest settlement of Indians outside of India, and the investment of those Indians back in India you know, so in that way a country benefit. Because here you have got, you know you are

15 not collecting tax revenue, but they are sending money back to their family who is then spending the money at the shop. There is obviously lots of space for future research on white South Africans, because I think white South Africans very quickly convert, it takes a generation to convert. So, those white South African's that left in '95 because they were scared of the future, their children

20 are Aussies, they are not South Africans. Whereas, if black South African's leave you are an African, you know you are not so the conversion of somebody, you know the guys that have gone back to the UK, or the guys that have gone to America, or the guys that have gone to the Netherlands, you know they quickly become those people, whereas Indians, an Indian moving to Durban

they will always be Indians you know, so that is also quite interesting, but that is for future research I suppose. But yes, Greg thank you very much for your insights and I will keep you posted.

INTERVIEWEE: Thank you, actually I do not know if this is helpful, I have just
5 been sitting things, we lost two teachers to immigration last year and one is going to go this year as soon as the international flights are open.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, really.

INTERVIEWEE: One is talking about it, they are all youngsters.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, yes that was the other question, the age yes.

10 INTERVIEWEE: So, thirties we do not have many in their twenties.

INTERVIEWER: Yes --- yes. But again, you guys are doing so much in terms of your internship program, I mean Jack is in Miss Molefe's class.

INTERVIEWEE: She is brilliant, or are you finding it ...

INTERVIEWER: Yes --- yes, no, I mean absolutely brilliant, I mean I think that
15 is a world class story and case study, I think it is brilliant. So, yes, it is interesting times we are in, but we either get on the bus or we are out.

INTERVIEWEE: Absolutely. I believe there is a place for white people here.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, well you know so do I, you get to the point where you are like listen guys then please go.

20 INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Because it is, I am getting sick of standing around a braai and everybody does nothing but complain about everything. From the traffic light not working to the political corruption, and this guys if you serious about your future you do the work on the political side, and you take a view. You say 10

years' time my suspicion is, it is not going to be great, on that basis I would rather want to go to somewhere where I appreciate and understand the political system. I think that is the best move, well make the decision, but it does not help standing around a braai complaining about it.

5 INTERVIEWEE: Yes, you are absolutely right, just reinforcing negativity.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, and it is also what there is, certainly one thing that Gibbs has taught me Greg is the credibility of the information.

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So, it is very, and I think it is quite typical of the white South
10 African's in a sense that, you know they are very quick to throw out a stat about the number of families that are leaving. It is just, it is literally bullshit that they have heard on you know, News 24 opinion. You know and that is the type of thing that is breeding that sort of negativity, so the credibility of these stats that people are throwing out is just not, it is irritating to be honest.

15 INTERVIEWEE: Yes. At Gibbs have you encountered Abduhla?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, he was one of my lecturers, yes.

INTERVIEWEE: Okay, we had him, a bit also designed thinking here, his experience in the school, he sent, the last year he was in charge of the MBA's.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, so he would have been in charge of that module so, yes
20 you do a, throughout the course you have got various modules, and you basically assign so your syndicate has to pick a company to analyse through the various modules, and then the business gets the benefit of the feedback. So, it is basically as you say, getting a group of consultants coming in and analysing your business.

INTERVIEWEE: Fantastic.

INTERVIEWER: Giving you the feedback take it or leave it, it does not matter it does not cost you a cent.

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, he had accountants, he had a medical doctor.

5 INTERVIEWER: Yes, it is good to get all the different views on it as well you know. You do not have to take action over the points, but at least you have got some view of some eyes that are new you know.

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

10 INTERVIEWER: So, yes, I am actually, I am doing an elective this weekend on diversity and inclusion. Which should be interesting, it is a yes, we are in an interesting space at the moment in South Africa with the various movements, and you know all of the political noise, you know the BEE side of things. The Black lives matter it is a really, I mean I must say the, you know my class, there are 80 of us in a class, and it is a very diverse class. So, yes it has been an
15 interesting year, and I think you arrive at Gibbs on day one and they are like guys we encourage, debate and encourage you know, to voice your opinions on things provided, your humble opinion is backed up. You know the first thing you sit in a lecture and you are given all of this pre-reading that you have to do, which is theory based, and all of that sort of stuff. Then somebody sits in a
20 class and go well I think this, and they are like well humble opinion is lovely, but it is not welcome in the classroom. You know you have got to be backed up with.

INTERVIEWEE: Facts, research.

INTERVIEWER: Well not with facts, but just an educated view on it, you know based on what you have read and not just a hey, but I heard that 20 families a day are leaving you know. You have got to come with more. Yes, that is definitely one of the things I have left there with in terms of a News 24 opinion, versus something that is credible. So, yes thank you very much Greg for your time.

INTERVIEWEE: You are welcome I did not seem to say much at all.

INTERVIEWER: No --- no, it is absolutely ...

END OF AUDIO

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