

“Our Person of the Decade”

Anniversary Speech

EXCERPT 1 (OPENING):

In 2006, *TIME Magazine* surprised the nation when it named YOU as its Person of the Year.

Since 1927, *TIME Magazine* has chosen a man, woman, or idea with the most influence on events of the preceding year.

You will recall that *TIME* chose YOU in 2006 for your control of the Information Age – things like the World Wide Web, Wikipedia, Facebook, and YouTube.

But if you look a little deeper, why – really? – was *TIME Magazine* celebrating you?

Let me refresh your memory.

TIME recognized you because it was impressed by – and I quote –

- your “community and collaboration on a scale never seen before”
- by people “helping one another for nothing” – and changing the world
- by “bringing together small contributions of millions of people and making them matter”
- and by “an explosion of productivity and innovation”

When I think about these past 10 years at The Entrepreneurs Center and try to sum up all we ought to celebrate today, these are precisely the same things I think about:

- community and collaboration
- people helping one another for nothing
- the contributions of so many that matter so much to our clients here
- and of course – a virtual explosion of productivity and innovation

I think about YOU.

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EXCERPT 2 (CLOSING):

I believe these two new initiatives mark a new beginning for The Entrepreneurs Center as we celebrate our first 10 years of business incubation in Dayton – and get ready to turn the page.

We will do what we do in brand-new ways – and with even better results.

Make no mistake: Taking these bold, new steps to dig out and vet new ideas – and provide cutting-edge, high-tech assistance to our entrepreneurs – will be no easy task.

I promise you: Business incubation is not for chickens.

Like Vincent Van Gogh, the famous painter, once said: “What would life be if we had no courage to attempt anything?”

But if we do have the courage, the rewards to this region – and to all of us – will be many.

Because if you look back historically, through the last seven recessions, it’s been entrepreneurs who essentially restarted our economy.

Why?

Because entrepreneurs are the change agents of capitalism.

As we go forward, we at The Entrepreneurs Center will continue to nurture our entrepreneurs – our change agents of capitalism.

We will continue to close down barriers and open up doors.

And we will continue to rely on you:

- you – our Board and our staff
- you – our trusted advisers and our people in the Know-How Network
- you – our economic development partners in the city, county, and state
- you – our students who are learning firsthand the risks and rewards of entrepreneurship
- you – our elected officials and political supporters
- and you – our former tenants and current clients – both on-site and off-site

If I, like *TIME Magazine*, were charged with choosing the Person of the Year – or in our case, the Person of the Decade – who has had the greatest influence on events here at The Entrepreneurs Center, I would choose YOU.

For I believe each and every one of you here is an influencer and an achiever.

And I believe if all of us, together, continue to plan with audacity – and execute with vigor – then progress will be our continued, magnificent byproduct.

Thank you, one and all. ◀