EP.112 - Brian Castleberry and Robin Wiener

Narrator: You're listening to *BioTalk* with Rich Bendis, the only podcast focused on

the BioHealth Capital Region. Each episode, we'll talk to leaders in the industry to break down the biggest topics happening today in BioHealth.

Rich Bendis: Hi, this is Rich Bendis. I'm your host for *BioTalk*. We have a little different

flavor in today's podcast. We have actually two guests, rather than the one that we normally do. We're actually going to do something that—we

normally focus domestically and have not focused that much

internationally, and we thought the listeners would like to hear about, how do you do business internationally? When is the right time for a small BioHealth business to start thinking about international? And who

do you go to, to get some good advice when you're starting to

contemplate an export, or doing something internationally with your business? We have two fantastic guests to talk about this today. One is

Brian Castleberry, who is the Regional Manager for the Office of

International Investment and Trade for the State of Maryland, who has been doing this for many years, and he will have a chance to introduce

himself to you soon.

0:01:12 The other guest is Robin Wiener, who is the Cofounder and President of

Get Real Health, a very successful Montgomery County and Maryland

company. Robin and Brian, welcome to *BioTalk*.

Robin Wiener: Thank you.

Brian Castleberry: Thanks, Richard. I just want to thank you, Richard. You and I, we've

known each other for many years, and I just want to say right off the bat that it has been great to watch you and your team do all the great work that you do for Maryland companies this past decade. It's a hugely

important part of our ecosystem here and really appreciate the work that you guys do. Thank you for having us on. Robin, another old, dear friend of mine. It has been great to watch Robin and her company grow and

thrive, especially in the realm of exporting.

0:02:00 So it's good to be with you guys today, and hope to see each other in

person again very soon. So yeah, my name is Brian Castleberry. I am the

Regional Manager for Africa and the Middle East for the Maryland Department of Commerce. My main focus, main goal, is to help

companies like Get Real Health export their technology and services. We

think Maryland has some of the best companies, best technology on the planet. Our goal is to get that into the international markets, help these companies increase sales through export.

Rich Bendis:

Brian, thank you. Also, thank you for the recognition of BioHealth Innovation and being a partner with Maryland Department of Commerce all of these years. But we're really going to focus on you and Robin today and talking about exporting internationally. With your brief introduction you did, you talked a little bit about what you do, but you didn't explain how you got into the role that you're in today, and how did your career progress to where you got involved in international investment and trade. Let's tell the listeners as little bit about your personal background.

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Brian Castleberry:

Yeah, so, former sales guy, worked for a company called Biocom in Rockville, Maryland, and sold their pre-clinical research to NIH, the University of Maryland, and then jumped over to the Maryland Department of Commerce and helped manage their science and healthcare team. That's actually when I first met Robin and her crew. As manager, I was just getting pulled more into the international part of what we do at the Office of International Investment and Trade. There was a spot that opened up about ten years ago, to jump on that part of the team for the Maryland Department of Commerce, and joined. I had already done a few different international trade shows with companies, and Robin and I will talk about some of those later. But yeah, just really fell in love with the mission of helping a company explore export opportunities abroad. So, yeah, really just started working with them internationally, while I was at the Department of Commerce, and just moved into a full-time role doing it.

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Rich Bendis: It sounds like rather than formal training or education, you learned on

the job, Brian. Is that correct?

Brian Castleberry: Correct, yeah. There are some courses and certifications that we've

taken, but most of my work is just with helping the companies, understanding how our foreign offices work, how they help companies,

understand the markets, connect them with distributors, potential partners. So, yeah, I would say it was all on-the-job training for sure.

Rich Bendis: Great. Well, that basically says that no one should be intimidated about

trying to explore international for their company, so—

Brian Castleberry: Rich, if I can do it, you know anybody can do it.

Rich Bendis: I didn't want to say that, Brian.

Brian Castleberry: [laughs]

Rich Bendis: But you and I go back far enough that you can say it for me, okay?

Brian Castleberry: Indeed. No, but my job's easy. Again, Robin and the Maryland companies,

they're the one taking the risks every day. They're the ones who sometimes jump into trying to export, sort of a leap of faith.

0:05:05 So really my job is to make sure they're getting all the resources at the

state and federal level. We'll talk about those a little bit later. But, make sure that they get all the resources to help them make that decision. And

that's our goal.

Rich Bendis: That's great. And I know that you had many people that you could have

asked to be on this podcast with you, who are exporting out of Maryland, but you hand-picked Robin Wiener, Cofounder and President of Get Real Health. So, Robin, I think the listeners would like to know a little bit more about you personally. And then we'll introduce the company after that.

Robin Wiener: That sounds great, yeah. Brian is a really dear friend, and we have a lot of

fun together. It's great to have people in your corner like Brian. It's fun, it's exciting, he gets us out in front of places. So I look forward to kind of really diving into that. But a little bit about who I am—I am a resident of Rockville, Maryland. I am a mother of two boys, one 20, one 15. They keep me busy. Just like everybody else out there, we've got to multitask,

as an entrepreneur and a president of a company.

0:06:11 I actually started in HR back in the day. I was a director of HR for a

company called USWeb. With that, I—this is during the dotcom era—I went ahead and said, "You know, I've always wanted to kind of start something ourselves." But at that time, when everything kind of imploded, myself and two other guys—Jason Harmon and Mark

Heaney—decided to say, "You know what? We can do this ourselves." So I kind of came in as the people person at Get Real Health, Mark is an engineer by trade, and Jason is a developer. So that's kind of how we

started it, and we brought our skill sets all together. Again, you grow, and you learn, and expand, and anybody can do that. I can tell the whole story of Get Real Health, but it's really starting at something very small and growing it, going through the incubator program here in Montgomery County—that's where we started—and really bootstrapped it all the way up until selling the company a couple years ago.

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I went to school for fashion merchandising. I don't think that matches what I'm doing today by any means. But I do like good clothes. I've always had a sales background, back in retail and even in HR and recruiting, on the sales side. So you really do have that feel for it. Through that, it just kind of expanded and expanded, as running the company. Now that we are a multi-international company with employees around our country and around the world, you learn as you go. You expand, you get really good mentors, and I think that's one of the biggest things I learned in my career, is having really great mentors to help you through the difficult times, and advise you going forward. So, that's a little bit of my story. What else would you love to hear about, Richard?

Rich Bendis:

I think that what would be beneficial now is that before we go back and flip it to Brian and talk about him working with you, let's go through the history of Get Real Health—what is it that the company actually does, how it has progressed from being an incubator company in Montgomery County to being acquired several years later, and your role in helping all that materialize.

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And then lastly we'll get into, Robin, when was the need for you, or the opportunity for you, to explore international. Then we'll get into what Brian did to help you and to enter that area.

Robin Wiener:

Sure. We started the company as a professional services company back in 2001, really with the idea of—we came from the experience of working in the web world—building websites, doing e-commerce websites, et cetera, basically back in that dotcom world. So when Mark, Jason, and I got together, we said, "Well, first what we're going to do is start as a professional services company" because we were bootstrapping it. So we didn't go out with big funding or anything like that. So, we started it in the incubator, just the three of us.

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We started to add a couple people. But while we were there, we got involved with a company that worked in healthcare, in the wellness area, so we were building their platform there, supporting them and building that. With that, we had a very good relationship with Microsoft. And with that, we had this great experience with them, we got to know them a little bit, and we started with something called HealthVault. This is really the base of where Get Real Health comes from. HealthVault is a database that—think about during Katrina, there were floods and winds and everything got ruined in New Orleans. So people went to look for their medical records. In their houses, it was all flooded. It was completely gone. So they said, "Okay, I'm going to go to my doctor's offices." Same thing; all that was flooded and gone. So they said, "Oh, I'll go to my hospital system." And, the servers were all blown up. So when they ended up in Dallas or Houston and said, "Hey, I have cancer, and I'm taking treatment," they were like, "What medicine are you on?" They had no clue.

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So this started with Microsoft uploading all that information into the cloud. And, we really thought this was a fantastic idea. We believed in it. We believe in cloud. We believe in a web base. And that is the basis of where Get Real Health really took off. And with our partnership with Microsoft, we built a product called InstantPHR which is the front end of—you have the database of all this great information coming in from your clinical world, and then we built the interactive piece of that for the patient, or the citizens. While we did that, we did a couple projects for American Heart Association, American Cancer Society. We built the websites for them, for that. And then we realized after the first one we did, and they said, "Oh, could you do it in Spanish?"—and this is where the international piece comes in—"Can you do it in Spanish?"—we said, "Oh my gosh, we can't." We had to rebuild the whole site. So then we made a platform play, which we built this product called InstantPHR, which is a platform with over 200 web parts. But we realized when we built it that we had to do it in multiple languages.

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So, without thinking about it, it kind of took us on the route for international. As we expand, we start getting larger clients, and our biggest—we had American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, but one of our biggest clients we started that has pushed us internationally very quickly—with our partnership with Microsoft,

Microsoft loved what we were doing, asked us to be the integration piece into HealthVault for multiple areas, actually advised us as we're building this product to go on top of what at that time was HealthVault—they loved our technology, they loved what we were building. They introduced us to our first international client, and that is TELUS, and TELUS is the second largest telecommunications company in Canada. And with that, they had a new division called TELUS Health, and they wanted to put a patient portal out to the citizens of Canada. So that is the beginning of our move into Canada. Through that, one of the big things you learn when you go internationally—that you have to have it in multiple languages.

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In Canada, you also have to have it in French-Canadian. So because we had built the product beforehand knowing if we ever want to be able to have it in multiple languages, we had to build this platform in a different way, to be able to add that language skill in there, we were able to pretty easily put it into French. With that, expanding out. So all of a sudden, we've got something kind of unique in the marketplace, that you can have it in English, and you can have it in French. You can have it in Western languages and Eastern languages. So, with that, the company started to expand. We're now in the U.K. We have one of the largest hospital systems here in the U.S. We're in the U.K. We're in Sweden. We're in the Netherlands. And expanding, expanding, expanding, as we're growing. And this is where I'll talk a little bit about how Brian starts to help us in these areas. About three years ago, we are at a point in our growth knowing that it is time to probably go ahead and sell. We only got a little funding along the way. I highly suggest that you don't go crazy on going out and getting a ton of investment, if you want to be able to sell and make a profit for yourself.

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We decided at that time it was time for us to put it on the market. We had three or four officers, and the best place that I thought my employees would land was a company called CPSI out of Alabama. I negotiated the deal with them, and we became part of CPSI three years ago this month. It was fantastic for the partners, but it was also really fantastic for the employees. They landed in a really good area. And the good news is I'm still running the company. Get Real Health is actually still the patient engagement platform for not only—for 100,000 people at CPSI, but also I'm able to do what I've been doing all my life, for the

last 22 years, and still doing the same thing, but not having to worry about payroll anymore or anything like that, which is a lovely thing. But they've allowed me to run the company like I've run it all along.

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And we just hit over two million people using the platform in Canada. We're now in UAE. We're in New Zealand, Australia, the Netherlands, and I think we're at 22 hospitals in the U.K. and Wales. And then we're about to go live with the largest hospital system here in the United States. So, we started very small, we bootstrapped it, saw a need in the market, being able to do international from there, and then as we grew, years and years later, we sold the company. Richard, did I hit all the right points?

Rich Bendis:

I think you hit most of them, and then we're going to turn it back to Brian and talk about how you guys met and what he helped with. But, you were listening to Robin Wiener, who is the Cofounder and President of Get Real Health, sort of giving the history of a pure startup over 20 years ago, in Montgomery County, Maryland, how it has progressed to where it is today, to become a global company, with strategic partners and assistance from other people. And one of those people that she got some assistance in as they were growing is Brian Castleberry, the Regional Manager for the Office of International Investment and Trade, in selected areas in the world, at the Department of Commerce.

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So Brian, that was a great story and a great introduction by Robin of Get Real Health. Why don't you talk a little bit about how you two got engaged, and then talk about some of the things you helped Get Real Health and Robin with as they were expanding in the international markets?

Brian Castleberry:

Great. I met Robin and her team in 2016. Rich, we do two major trade shows a year. One of the ways we help companies get into these international markets is we do a lot of trade shows overseas. There's one big one in Germany in November every year called MEDICA, and we take between 10 and 12 Maryland companies, selling anything from health IT to anything you would find in a hospital, diagnostics. It really runs the whole gamut in the healthcare industry. So yeah, I really first met Robin in 2016 recruiting her company to come to the show with us.

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We will go to the show organizers. We'll buy space and subsidize it to our Maryland companies. While they're at the show, Rich, we help set B2B meetings through our offices. So while you're at the trade show, our offices will set four or five meetings for your company a day. We really want to make these trade show experiences a little more intimate than they are. These are massive trade shows. The one in Dusseldorf, MEDICA, it's about 17 convention centers in one place, so they're massive. They can be a little bit intimidating. We're there to help the company sort of navigate this show and set up relevant and valuable B2B meetings. So that's really how Robin and I met.

Rich Bendis:

Excuse me one second. Just for people to understand, what is the criteria you use in selecting those companies that you believe you want to take to shows like that, and how did Get Real Health fit into that criteria?

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Brian Castleberry:

Great question. We do get a lot of applicants. The first thing, we want to just see if the company is making sales. If they're making sales here, even though they're a startup, then somebody in the U.S. is buying your technology or service; probably somebody abroad will, too. It's a very tough market here. Again, we've got the best technology in the world. So if you can make it here, you can make it in the international markets. The number two criteria, which I think is just as important, is you need to have management buy-in. So when I talk to a company, I'm talking to Robin. She is bought in to the whole concept of exporting her technology. Robin has a colleague, Genie Saleh, who is a Director of International Business Development, so she has a person on her staff whose sole role is to try and explore other markets. So yeah, one, we like to see you have sales here, and two, management buy-in. Because it's scary, and there is a little bit of investment on the company's part—a lot of investment, in time and money.

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So we want to make sure these companies are ready and have the right attitude to being in export.

Rich Bendis:

Then when you say you invite them to go to the show—I know this is one of the benefits—do you help cover some of the costs the company encounters? For example, going to the first international show and not knowing what to expect?

Brian Castleberry:

Yeah, we do, Rich. We have a travel grant, so it's a \$5,000 reimbursable travel grant, that helps these companies with some of their hotel costs, some of their air costs, and some of the booth costs. Then we go in and buy a massive space, and then subsidize it, and then charge a company a fraction of what they would have to pay if they would have to go on their own. We've been doing these shows for a lot of years. We've got a great place, a great spot in the convention center, very strategically located. Once companies have been there, everybody kind of knows where the Maryland Pavilion is.

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We usually partner up with the U.S. Department of Commerce and do some events, just to make the companies—give them that warm and fuzzy feeling about being in a different country at a huge show for the first time. Then again, our local offices—and I can kind of touch into how we're organized—but we have 15 different offices, Rich, throughout the world. I manage an office in Dubai, which covers the UAE, Saudi Arabia, do a little bit of work in Qatar, a little bit of work in Oman. I have an office in South Africa that I manage. It's in Durban, but it covers all of sub-Saharan Africa. We have a regional manager for Europe, so Robin, when she goes to Germany, she worked with me and our regional manager for Europe. A regional manager for China, Korea, Japan. A regional manager for Southeast Asia, India, Singapore, Australia. And then we have an Americas regional manager who covers Canada—we've got an office in Montreal—and then through Mexico and Latin America.

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So they're doing the same thing I'm doing in these different markets, really just to try and help a company understand that market and see if it's a good fit. And a lot of times, Richard, we tell them it's not. "Hey, your technology is too expensive to go in this country right now. China is too competitive. You won't be able to compete." So a lot of what we do is telling companies that, "Yeah, this market might look attractive to you, but the opportunities just aren't there yet."

Rich Bendis:

I think that's good, you have an independent validation as to whether or not the international market is right for them. And it's nice to hear that from somebody that's not as close to the company and understands what the potential customers and the markets are in these international countries, which you've been doing business for a long time, Brian. Let me flip it back to Robin. Robin, let's go back to 2016. You were testing the waters on expanding into Canada and some other areas. You get introduced to Brian, and you run into Brian, and you further explore going into other areas internationally. Let's talk about how that evolved, and how did you prioritize where there might be other great international opportunities for Get Real Health, and the support you got from the Department of Commerce and Brian's group?

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Robin Wiener:

Absolutely. By the time we met Brian, we had been doing a little bit of international, so we were familiar with it, but really to expand our footprint was along with Brian. And remember, Brian is not just for the State of Maryland; he networks you. And I think that's really important to say, that as my Maryland representation, he is out there to making sure I'm meeting not just here in the Maryland side, but also the U.S. Commerce Department. So it's really being part of this really robust network. So you get to meet Brian; you get to meet all his friends, which expands that network in a really beautiful way. The first time I met him is I flew into Dusseldorf.

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It was a crazy day for me, because they lost my luggage on the way in, and Brian was—it was lovely to be able to arrive and know that you've got the State of Maryland behind you—to find clothes, to get you [laughs] something to eat. But it is overwhelming, it's huge, and it is so reassuring to know that you're going to this huge conference, you're not exactly sure what you should be doing, and being able to walk in and you had the people from your state there as really support side of it. They helped fund us. They got us in there. That was just one piece of it. The conferences are one piece of what Brian and the team does for us. We've had situations in the past where we opened our new offices; he had the Secretary of Labor here to support our new offices. You talked about when you're playing a game, you've got the third team; they're our third team, right? They are our audience They're supporting us in multiple different ways. Brian put me up for an award as an exporter of the State of Maryland, which I won, and has me meet the governor, and get us in front of there.

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So it's more than just showing up to our conference. Which is fantastic. We went to Dubai for Arab Health, and I got to go with Brian on that. But along with that, I sat at dinner, and Brian put me next to the Lieutenant

Governor of Maryland, to expand what is going on in our world and what's happening in Maryland, and how can Maryland help small businesses expand and go. So, we've got the great things of these conferences, but inviting me to a small summit of leadership from the Middle East, you cannot buy yourself into that. That is *phenomenal*, to be able to do that kind of thing. But along with Brian, then he introduces me to Carrie [sp] and over to the U.S. Commerce Department, where we had a problem with a client going live in Sweden.

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With that being through a conference, people that Brian knew, got us there, we got that cleared up through the U.S. Commerce Department, through our embassies. So, it's really not just one piece. If you get involved with Brian and his team, it actually is having that third player. They're there to support you and get you where you need to be. Internationally, for us, it was a no-brainer. What's kind of interesting, between the State of Maryland and the U.S. Commerce Department is you also learn how to culturally go into these markets. Very different, and Brian can absolutely support this. As a woman with a last name Wiener, it's very interesting to go into some of those countries, Saudi Arabia and et cetera. I've learned how to do things in a certain way. When I'm giving a business card to a man in Saudi Arabia, I need to make sure that I give the business card in a certain way. That's just their culture. It is what it is.

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We learned in Finland that you don't address people in certain ways. You also have that support to make sure that culturally, you are matching that country's culture. It's invaluable to us, to get this kind of support. And I've been able to do things as speak at the White House on exporting. I've spoken in multiple U.S. embassies around the world and here in the United States. I've gone and spoken in front of the State of Maryland. We won the Incubator of the Year Award as a graduate. So, we've gotten some fantastic exposure here in Maryland and around the world.

Rich Bendis:

Congratulations on all your success, Robin. But I think some of the listeners who are thinking about international have to have realistic expectations. So, let's talk a little bit about, when you make a decision to go international, and you want to identify and cultivate new relationships and customers internationally, talk a little bit about how long it takes to cultivate and build those relationships where people trust one another,

and how long does the sales cycle last internationally versus what you might be doing domestically.

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Robin Wiener:

Our sales cycle is long either way, because we're working with large hospital systems or Departments of Health around the world. One of the biggest things I would say is—and you can work with the State of Maryland and the U.S. Commerce Department—is to find a partner inside a country. First you want to define. You want to go in, you want to work together with the international department to say, "Okay, I think I want to go into this country." And they've got really good people on the ground that would say, "Yes, it's a good market for you" or "No, you're going to be really competing." So that's the first piece. And you want to take a look at the economic side of it. If you're going into a Third World country or an emerging market, you may have to make sure that your products are not too expensive for that market. So it's really important to take a good look at that. Sometimes it's easier to go initially into the Western markets that are more similar to the United States—New Zealand, Australia, the EU, some of the Middle East—because you want to make sure financially there is something there.

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You want to take a look at if you're competitive, or if there is a lot of competition within-country. A lot of times you'll find that there are competitors, but maybe you've got something unique that can do it. But one of my biggest things I would suggest is to find through working with U.S. Commerce and with the State of Maryland, partners that they know are known partners inside that country, kind of a sales agent sales piece. Brian has got a great team that he works with in the Middle East, in Dubai, that we work with, and they are able to go ahead and put—this is a whole 'nother part of the relationship here—they bring you into the conference—when we went into Dubai for Arab Health, they set up a series of interviews or meetings for us, with potential clients there. So you go in and you actually are talking to people on the ground.

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When talking with people on the ground, you're able to go ahead and say, "Yeah, this works" without spending a ton of money trying to do this. Because you want to be able to maybe meet with five or six potential clients, and within that maybe three or four days you're at the conference, you're going to be able to say, "Wait a second, this is not the

right spot for me" and then go back and talk with Brian and the team that he has on the ground there and say, "My experience is this." So, it will help. You're either going to say yea or nay. Then you have to realize you've got to put the time and effort, timeframes, different—we do calls at 2:00 in the morning. We do those kind of things. But you have to make—not only do your research, partner with the right groups, being advised by Maryland and the U.S. government—make that relationship, and know you're going to commit time and money. Sometimes it's not so much a lot of money upfront, but it is time. And realize that you've got to work with their culture and their timeframes.

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So it's not unheard of us to have a call at 2:00 in the morning East Coast time, so we can have the right call in Abu Dhabi or Saudi Arabia. So you've got to take a chance, and if you're an entrepreneur, you know you've got to dip your toe in and see, "Does this work for me?"

Rich Bendis:

That's great words of wisdom, Robin. Brian, other than taking companies to shows and helping them while they're at MEDICA or Arab Health, what else do you do for companies throughout the year other than the conferences? Because the conferences may last a week each, but then there's 50 other weeks that you're not at conferences in this company. So what else happens, and what other kind of support do you provide?

Brian Castleberry:

Robin mentioned the U.S. Department of Commerce. Richard, there's an Export Assistance Center in Baltimore. Every state has an Export Assistance Center. Ours is in Baltimore. Great team. Carey Esslinger, Aisha Jones, great group of people.

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They've got certain programs that we can help reimburse for. One of them that Robin has used before is called the Gold Key Program. Say a company wants to go into a market and the best way to do that is through a distributor; the Gold Key Program will come up with a qualified distributor list. We have the same program at Maryland. Ours is named a different thing; it's called the FlexEx program. If a company is looking to go into a market, we will vet distributors, come up with a qualified distributor list. We also just do market checks. So, if a company wants to understand a little bit more about what's going on in the healthcare industry in the UAE, my office out there will write them a very tailored market assessment report around their company, explaining, giving them a SWOT analysis, explaining the opportunities and the threats. I would

say besides the trade show help, it's just really working with Maryland companies day in and day out, and helping them, educating them on where their opportunities of exporting might lie, and then how do we do that.

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Usually the trade show, Richard, that's at the end. A company comes to me on day one, we go through a market, a market looks good, my office out there comes up with a list of trade shows that these companies should really take a hard look at. And then that's the ultimate goal. You don't need to come with us. There's all kinds of different trade shows. You can go on your trade show, still use the grant, and still use our B2B service. But we want to get these companies to understand the market and then eventually go there. COVID was really hard. We tried to do some video conferencing and it just didn't—it was a good Band-Aid for a couple months, but after a year, people just couldn't do it. These trade shows are designed to help people meet, get in the same room, shake it up, and do deals. Our ultimate goal is to get that company into that country.

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Rich Bendis:

You mentioned COVID and the pandemic. Did it cause a pause, sort of, in your operations of your international office? And I understand the Zooming, because everybody has been doing it for two and a half years now. Do you believe we've turned a corner and are people flying back and forth across the oceans now? And are most of the meetings that you have in person rather than virtual, or do they have a hybrid opportunity for those people who still aren't comfortable traveling internationally yet?

Brian Castleberry:

This year has been great. I've been to Dubai twice already. I've been to Cairo for meetings and trade shows, once with us at Arab Health in January and then called Trade Winds, with the U.S. Department of Commerce, and that was throughout the UAE, Egypt. So people are getting back out there. Our first trade show back was MEDICA in 2021. We took the Lieutenant Governor. He led the delegation. He also went to the U.K. to do some other events. But no, I think Rich, we're back. One of my colleagues did get COVID in Dubai, did have to stay there for ten days, so there are some risks involved.

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The shows were smaller, Rich, but they were great, because the people that needed to be there to do deals were there. There wasn't a lot of people who were just there just to be there, because they go every year. They were people who were serious, wanted to get deals done, and our company did very well at both shows. So I think they're back, but there are some risks involved, especially if you have to stay over there for another week or so.

Rich Bendis:

Thanks, Brian. I think that we're going to somewhat close out this podcast with some closing comments from both of you. Because a lot of the people who have been listening to *BioTalk* haven't heard much about international opportunities and how to do business internationally, I think this is a good tutorial or an intro for some of those who are considering it and don't know how to tip their foot into the water, as you say. You really have a team within Maryland that can help you basically validate whether the time is right for you, whether you've got the right products, whether you're priced appropriately, and whether there's an open market for your business.

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Robin, why don't we let you have some closing comments about the whole international experience, the time you've invested in it, the return on the time investment, and the relationship you developed with the State of Maryland.

Robin Wiener:

Absolutely. Richard, I think one thing people might be a little hesitant is to understand that the world is flat, people are people, and there's business everywhere. That was something that really was fascinating to me. I just had a bunch of my clients from around the world come in, and it didn't matter what country they came from; everybody was relating to one another, because we all have the same problems. Especially for us right now, because at Get Real Health, we are the digital front door for large hospital systems and large governments, for their digital.

0:35:01

So everybody has been doing, again, virtual calls, being able to schedule appointments, all those kind of things, and bring all your health data together; that's what we do out there. And we have the same problems here in the United States as they do in Sweden or in New Zealand. They all have the same things. So that's one thing to understand: that we're not that different from one another, so don't be worried about that. Just get out there and do it. It has been a phenomenal experience for us. It Is

reassuring when I am in a country to know that I've got the backing of the State of Maryland and our U.S. government. It takes a little bit of that worry away, that I know if god forbid something happens, I can go to the embassy and they'll take care of me and they'll get me to where I need to be. But in general, it has expanded—we are probably 70% international and 30% U.S.-based, business-wise. We've got right now three RPs out around the world with our partnerships. What does help a lot is that we've got the great partnerships, we've got these great groups, and we've got the backing of the State of Maryland.

0:36:05

So it has been an incredible experience. We will continue to do it. We take advantage of everything we can. And I would highly recommend that everybody gives it a try. It's worth the try. And if it doesn't work for you, that's fine, but it will open your eyes to how much business you can do outside of the U.S. We're leaders here, and people recognize that around the world, and it's a great time to get back at it.

Rich Bendis:

Robin, thanks. I think you say "give it a try" but you've given it more than a try if 70% of your business now is international.

Robin Wiener:

Absolutely!

Rich Bendis:

I'd say it's worth more than a try, because it really can expand your business dramatically. It's unusual—normally it's the reverse; 30% might be international, and 70% might be domestic. You're an example of how you capitalized on successfully penetrating the international markets to where now you have that imbalance of international being larger than the domestic, which is very unusual for a healthcare company in the United States.

0:37:08

Robin Wiener:

Absolutely. And what it has done for us, which is interesting—we're just about—it will balance out probably by the end of the year, because we just won a very large one here in the U.S. But because, when you go into a large hospital system here, I can say I've got two million people using the platform in Canada, well, that's our largest hospital system here in the U.S. So it gives me a phenomenal reference. And, that I can do it in both Eastern and Western languages. Here in the United States, it's a melting pot. So, that I can do it in Arabic in Hebrew is something that's quite unique in the whole world. And I've got to tell you guys, it's a lot of

fun to be able to travel to all these really cool places, too. Brian and I have a heck of a time when we're together, right, Brian?

Brian: [laughs]

Robin: [laughs]

Rich Bendis: We're going to have to do a different podcast for that segment.

Robin Wiener: Oh, absolutely. Very different. Very, very different.

0:38:00

Rich Bendis: I understand. Robin, I'm going to flip over to close with Brian, but before I

do, this is Robin Wiener, who is the Cofounder and President of Get Real

Health, really who is the digital front door for healthcare systems

globally. Robin, if anybody wanted to learn more about Get Real Health

or talk to you about this, how would they get in touch with you?

Robin Wiener: One of the best places to do it, of course, is go to our website at

GetRealHealth.com. There's a ton of podcasts that are out there. There's

all kinds of articles. Or, my email is Robin.Wiener—W-I-E-N-E-R—at

GetRealHealth.com. And follow me on LinkedIn, too.

Rich Bendis: Oh yeah, okay! Thanks, Robin. Brian, I'm going to give you a chance to

close, too. What are your words of wisdom for our listeners related to

Maryland support for international?

Brian Castleberry: Robin, thank you so much. Robin really is—Robin is fearless. So it's just a

great example of a Maryland company who has been able to go, take

their great technology, great services abroad.

0:39:01 So we're very proud of her. We use her for—sort of every speaking

engagement we can, we get Robin to come help us out with that. But we're here to help. Again, we want to get your technology and services abroad. If you're doing well here in the States and you think that you might want to learn more about exporting, please give us a call, go to our website—Maryland Department of Commerce. I want to mention my teammates very quickly. We are led by Jessica. Reynolds; she is the Director for International. She does a great job of putting our strategic plan in place every year, a good understanding of different markets and trade shows we might want to go to. Hui-Min Tzeng is our rep for China,

Japan, and Korea. She has been with us for about a month, but just a genius. She lived in Shanghai for a number of years and really has a good understanding of the Asian market. Michael Howley is our Canada and Latin American rep. Thunderbird School of Management, knows his trade inside and out. Mia Romeo, she covers India, Australia, and Singapore.

0:40:02

Mia was an intern at the Department of Commerce and has since grown into one of our better trade reps that we have. And then Andrew Kreinik, another Thunderbird School of Management graduate, he covers Europe. So this team is here for you guys. As Robin said, even our leaders show to the top. We take the lieutenant governor to trade missions. They get it. So, the State of Maryland is behind you. The federal government is behind you. We want to correct that trade balance, get some Maryland companies out there exporting. So, feel free to reach out to us anytime.

Rich Bendis:

Thank you, Brian. We've been talking with Brian Castleberry, who is the Regional Manager, Office of International Investment and Trade, State of Maryland Department of Commerce. Brian, this was a great suggestion you had, for us to have this little podcast to introduce some of these listeners to international opportunities and the support you can get from the State of Maryland. And also, great suggestion to have Robin Wiener, who is the Cofounder and President of Get Real Health, who has really been a beneficiary of these services that the State of Maryland and you personally have been providing to her and her company.

0:41:07

So Brian, Robin, thank you very much for being on *BioTalk*, and people now know how to get a hold of you if they have further questions of exploring international opportunities for their own businesses. Thank you.

Brian Castleberry:

Thanks for helping us spread the word, Richard. Greatly appreciate it.

Robin Wiener:

Thank you, Richard. It was awesome.

Narrator:

Thanks for listening to *BioTalk* with Rich Bendis.

End of recording