

## Lessons Learned: Becoming the Watchmaker

On a late night in the Fall of 2020, I officially accepted the position of COO at ENX2. The rush of excitement was remarkable. After spending years stuck in Government and Non-Profit Economic Development, I had the opportunity to tap into my passion for marketing and creativity in the private sector. Truth be told, I had known Nicole Farber (our CEO & Founder) for twenty years, and had always known that we would eventually team up. And here I was - blasting music (more on that below) and jumping around with excitement - I was ready. After putting on my new ENX2 sweatshirt, I opened up the laptop, pulled up Google and searched "What does a COO actually do?"

Don't get me wrong, I understand the title and the basic principles, but I was searching for the real truth. What is a typical day in the life of a COO? What can I expect? In my past work life, I used to joke that if you asked 100 people to define Economic Development, you would get 100 different answers. Turns out that if you google "What does a COO actually do?" the same process unfolds. I got pages of articles providing key traits of a successful COO - enough bullet items to fill about 60 pages. There are no constants when it comes to being a COO. Cue the anxiety.

After waiting and pushing towards this dream job, in roughly 30 minutes I was being swallowed in fear and doubt. *Can I do this? Is there enough time in the day? Will I spend my nights huddled in the fetal position on my kitchen floor?* So I did what I always do to shake the anxiety - I put on some music. And in this case, it was Uncle Neil (Neil Young) who was going to calm me down. After several long breaths, I refocused and came to the realization that it is up to me to define the role of this COO position. I immediately began to comb through my memories to find a similar situation that I could relate to. As a visual learner, this technique is critical to me managing my anxiety and building the steps necessary to accomplish a task.

So I dove back into these articles, and began highlighting the buzz words: day-to-day, culture, process, operations, and leader - and it clicked. Peter Mazur. Who? Exactly. Peter Mazur was my grandfather - my mother's father. He was a remarkable man. Peter studied art in New York after high school before serving our country in World War II. After coming home and marrying Florence (my grandmother) and holding a few odd jobs, he settled into his passion as a jeweler and watchmaker, where he spent his years (up until 91 years old) working in a 6 x 6 station on the back of the house. He would fix and build watches, a lost art nowadays. Great story - but how does this relate to being a COO at ENX2?

It wasn't what my grandfather did, but how he did it. Peter had a huge whiteboard on the wall outside of his work station where each morning he would draw a beautiful picture - his inspiration for the day. He would work right alongside my grandmother to make breakfast - freshly squeezed orange juice (never store bought), coffee, and freshly baked bread (of course, never store bought). And then he went to work, and what a spectacle it was. Meticulous in his

work, he would pull apart a broken Rolex watch and rebuild it, one tiny piece at a time. So careful but so confident in his ways. The worse condition of the watch, the better. He thrived on solving the problem. Yet no matter how focused he was, he put his tools down the moment a customer rang that doorbell in the back. And I would sit and listen to him engage with these customers (again in a 6x6 work station). It was incredible. He was like their grandfather too. He did this every single day until he passed at 91 years old.

That's where my mind went. Right back to my childhood watching my grandfather Peter operate. It's that memory that shaped what I wanted my role as COO at ENX2 to be defined as. Inspiring from the moment I woke up. Working alongside the team to accomplish our goals and tasks. Treating clients with respect, as if they were family. And finally, getting into that work station and building the processes we need - one step at a time - to take ENX2 to the next level. So you can call me COO, or the Enforcer (as seen on our site), but if you truly know me, you can call me "The Watchmaker."



*From left to right: Me, Peter Mazur, and my sister Shannon, outside of his work station.*

### **Side Note**

I love music. It helps me get through the tough times, and energizes me more during the good. I can hear a song and pinpoint an exact memory or experience in my life. Each week I want to identify a song, album, or concert that is part of my DNA. First up - "Corduroy" by Pearl Jam. The first song I listened to after accepting the COO position at ENX2. It's my anthem. The song was Eddie Vedder's response to dealing with the pressures of fame and seeing the same \$12 corduroy jacket he wore remade into a \$650 version - producing one of my favorite lines: "They

can buy but can't put on my clothes." No matter what, Eddie Vedder was dedicated to being himself and wasn't going to let external factors influence who he was or what he stood for. Such a powerful song that always energizes me.