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t2pRI Board Member Patrick Riley's Green-Lit Leadership

think2perform Research Institute Board Member, Patrick Riley first developed leadership skills out of necessity as a 20-something aspiring filmmaker and musician. “I didn’t know it was leadership at the time,” says Patrick. “When you’re doing projects that are extremely ambiguous and self-starting, you’ve got to come up with a leadership plan and set of goals to get things to happen.”



Board Member Patrick Riley

While playing in the band, Cooper, Patrick relied on tech work to pay the bills, eventually founding the company Modern Survey with his brother Dan and Don McPherson, former Executive Director of think2perform Research Institute. “I learned very quickly that being an

entrepreneur is a lot like being an artist,” he recalls. In the early days of Modern Survey, Patrick admits to being a reluctant leader, again stepping up out of necessity. But he soon saw leadership in a new light. “There’s a lot of responsibility that comes with leadership,” says Patrick. “You have to expand out your skill set around values systems, being a good human being, setting realistic goals, and being clear and articulate.”

This leadership perspective served Patrick and the company extremely well as Modern Survey flourished over 16 years, catching the eye of Aon Hewitt which acquired the human capital management software in 2016.

In a twist of cinematic foreshadowing, Patrick’s “tech work” positioned him to return to his true artistic passion, filmmaking. He teamed up with a friend and director, Philip Harder, to produce Harder’s indie film, “Tuscaloosa.” The pair have since completed three feature-length films, including their most recent, “Cue the Strings,” a documentary showcasing the Duluth-band, Low. “I had never produced a movie, but it’s basically the same job as being CEO of a start-up,” says Patrick. “Every day is impossible, and you have to find a way forward.” Patrick expanded his filmmaking knowledge through an LA-based mentor and hands-on stints at the acclaimed Sundance Institute. Producing’s blend of creative, people management, technical, and financial problem-solving appeals to Patrick. “It’s an interesting and dynamic leadership role,” says Patrick. “First and foremost, there’s the safety of the crew — that’s a moral responsibility. Then there’s a responsibility to honor the

creative vision of the film, as well as manage the experience on set.”

Adapted from a book written in 1994, “Tuscaloosa” is set in 1973 and deals with women’s rights and civil rights. Developed amid the “Me Too” and “Black Lives Matter” movements, the film required extra reflection. “We had an amplified responsibility around getting the material right. There was a lot of brokering, a lot of listening, a lot of trying to find the best choices and make the best decisions.”

This approach mirrors Patrick’s thinking on moral, purposeful, and emotionally intelligent leadership. “Being a leader is really thinking about how your behaviors and actions have effects on others — your team, your larger community. It’s being aware of and taking responsibility for the space you’re holding.”

As a t2pRI Board Member, Patrick is energized and optimistic for the future. “I feel grateful to serve with such talented people; it’s a very self-aware board. I’m very excited about the current makeup of the board and our potential to expand even further by adding professionals with expertise in youth leadership and nonprofit governance.”

While Patrick’s filmmaking dreams are being realized, his entrepreneurial side is still hard at work, too. He and his brother recently launched the employee experience advisory company, RADICL, to help organizations design for the future of work.



If you'd like to watch "Tuscaloosa," it's available on Amazon Prime, Peacock and other streaming platforms.

Make your tax-deductible donation to think2perform Research Institute 501(c)(3) [here](#).

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