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[00:00:00] **Speaker 1** Okay, whenever you're ready. Perfect. That makes this official. It's like an official sound.

[00:00:05] **Speaker 2** I love it. It felt official. I've never done that before. I felt like I did a pretty good job for my first time. I felt I nailed it.

[00:00:11] **Speaker 1** It's really good. Okay, so my first question is, can you just say and spell your first and last name?

[00:00:20] **Speaker 2** Brian, B-R-I-A-N, Adam, A-D-A.

[00:00:24] **Speaker 1** And then what is your position here at the moment?

[00:00:26] **Speaker 2** I'm the president and owner.

[00:00:28] **Speaker 1** Perfect. So what inspired you to create Olympus Masked Colors?

[00:00:36] **Speaker 2** So I didn't create Olympus mascots. Olympus Mascots was created at some point back in the 1960s. We got a call from McDonald's. We were, at the time, producing apparel, aprons, and hats for McDonald's that was worn by their crew. And they asked us if we could make a Ronald McDonald jumpsuit, so a clown's jumpsuit. We made one of the first Ronald McDonald costumes ever. And then they asked to us to make a purple gumball, and a birdie, and a grimace, hamburger. That's how we got into mascots

[00:01:06] **Speaker 1** And then, so, I have a little bit of insight knowledge, but you did the Bucky Badger documentary, right? You interviewed for that. Yes. So, you previously played Bucky badgers, is that correct?

[00:01:17] **Speaker 2** Correct, yeah, when I was in college, I was the mascot, the beloved mascot, Bucky Badger, at the University of Wisconsin.

[00:01:24] **Speaker 1** And then, how did that inspire you to continue that legacy into this a little bit, and stuff like that? Even though it was already going on and stuff, but you were breaking a unique perspective into it, right?

[00:01:37] **Speaker 2** So I worked here for a while before I went to University of Wisconsin, so I grew up around mascots, always loved making people laugh, making people smile, having a good time, and that's what inspired me to become Bucky. And then when I bought Olympus in 2005, it allowed me to continue to enjoy that fun, the fun part about creating mascots or being mascots. Sorry, I totally butchered that response. I know I can always redo them, so...

[00:02:10] **Speaker 1** A little bit more about Bucky. What makes Bucky such a great mask?

[00:02:14] **Speaker 2** Bucky represents the University of Wisconsin. Sorry. Bucky not only represents the university of Wisconsin, he also represents an entire state. Fun, loving character, easy to laugh at, looks a little silly, a little top heavy, but has a really good time.

[00:02:30] **Speaker 1** And then in general, in your opinion, what makes a good mascot design.

[00:02:36] **Speaker 2** A mascot design, a good mascot design depends on what the intended usage is and depends on what you're trying to derive with it. So a great mascot design might just be a really cool looking product if you're trying to launch a new product. If you're representing a sports team or university, you want to create something that fans, old, young, students, kids can all get behind, get excited about. So you want something not too scary, you You want to also create a mascot if it's for a sports team or university where the performer can interact with fans, can run up and down bleachers or something that's not so large and cumbersome that they can't perform in it.

[00:03:16] **Speaker 1** And then, correct me if I'm wrong on this, but is Olympus basically the biggest mascot producing company in the U.S.?

[00:03:23] **Speaker 2** Yes, Olympus is the largest manufacturer of mascot costumes in the U.S.

[00:03:27] **Speaker 1** And then about how many, and you don't have the specifics that have to go into this, but how many companies do you have you work with, like how big is?

[00:03:38] **Speaker 2** If I guessed, we've probably done 25 to 30,000 mascots through the years. We work with hundreds of customers every single year, pro sports teams, collegiate sports teams, minor league baseball teams, restaurants, brands, all sorts of different characters representing everything down to even elementary schools.

[00:04:02] **Speaker 1** And then, like, you're mass-producing these a lot of times, but I don't think people represent, like... These are basically hand-produced. Like, you have people sewing these. These aren't machines creating all this stuff. Like, people are creating these.

[00:04:16] **Speaker 2** Yeah, each mascot, yes, there's not a machine where you press, hey, make a buck. You can't press the make a Bucky button. They are the stripes on Bucky's shirt are hand sewn together. If Geico Gecko has an expression in his face, that's hand painted on. The eyes are glued on and often hand painted. Horns are manually attached by our talented team members here at Olympus. It is truly a manual labor. If you walked around the production area, you would see. Their tools are glue guns, scissors, air brushes. It's not overly sophisticated. We're really just relying on some talented artists that can create some really cool things.

[00:04:57] **Speaker 1** And then what is, in your opinion, one of the oddest mascots that you had produced?

[00:05:05] **Speaker 2** So we've produced body parts. I can recall a kidney we produced for, I believe it was for a type of cancer awareness. We produced drumsticks, mosquito sprays. The interesting one was for, I believe, it was Wheaton College down in Illinois. We produced a mastodon, which was actually a two-person mascot. So someone was the front and someone was at the back. So I'm kind of curious how that tryout went. We're trying out for the front of the. Mastodon or to be at the rear end of the mastodons for your school's mask out, but that was certainly a unique one.

[00:05:42] **Speaker 1** I think a lot of people would be surprised how much it has evolved over the years. Like you're starting to get now the mascots like blink, you know, like move certain parts of their bodies that you didn't think you'd be able to move and stuff like that. How technologically evolved has this gotten?

[00:05:59] **Speaker 2** Bucky Badger's head over the years was originally made out of paper mache, so almost like an old school art project. Then we vacuum formed it. It was created out of a, carbon fiber, what was it? Fiberglass, thank you. Then Bucky was created out of fiberglass. It was really heavy when I was performing as Bucky Badger. The head weighed 25 pounds. Carbon fiber comes out, and now we make Bucky's head out of carbon fiber and cut, took maybe 10 pounds of weight out of that head. So there's always, the mascots are still made by hand. There has been incremental improvements in the materials people are using and the way we manufacture them.

[00:06:41] **Speaker 1** And then, of course you have to do it in detail, but some of this stuff is top secret. You're working with brands that wanna keep this under wraps and you get almost like a government secret service sort of thing, right?

[00:06:56] **Speaker 2** Absolutely. We're working on a very high profile project right now that I can't tell you about. Team members are required to sign NDAs for this interview. We've actually hidden some of the components so you can't see them because we need to keep those big product launches, those exciting new unveilings. We don't want to be the one that spoils and oh the brewers are adding a fifth sausage and it's going to be a chorizo. We want to make sure that the brewers can announce that when that was announced a couple years ago.

[00:07:26] **Speaker 1** You know, when I learned that Olympus was around and stuff like that, and they go national and stuff, but I was really surprised about how many costumes and mascots you actually create in Wisconsin.

[00:07:40] **Speaker 2** Yeah, it's our home state, we love it. So we do Bucky, we do Bernie Brewer, we do the Brewers Racing Sausages, UWM's Pounce, Marquette's Golden Eagle, all sorts of fun characters for the pro and collegiate sports teams, and then countless high schools, and yeah, it was pretty great.

[00:07:56] **Speaker 1** Yeah, I think that's, we've got a chance to interview some of them. Some of them are, the high schools are my favorite ones, because the kids are just like, you know, you got some of these kids that, you know are shy or verbally have issues, not issues, but like verbally have trouble, you now, expressing themselves, but once they get into a mascot costume or outfit, like they're a totally different person.

[00:08:18] **Speaker 2** Yeah, you can put on a brand new persona. You can be a different person. It's pretty cool to see when a performer, when a mascot allows a performer to come out of their shell.

[00:08:27] **Speaker 1** And then as a former mascot performing yourself, what do you look for in a costume? Like, what makes a costume good for you to perform?

[00:08:37] **Speaker 2** I mean, if you're a sports mascot, you want a costume that's functionally... For a sports team or university, it's important to be able to have some function, to be able to run, to not have gloves that are too big so you can use your hands, so you can catch a ball, so that you can high-five a kid, so a lot of it comes down to the functionality of the mascot. There are certain things people don't think about. Brewer's Chorizo, the racing sausage, has a gigantic sombrero. The sombrerro is so large, because you want to be able to see it inside the stadium, but it wouldn't fit through a standard-sized Darwin. So we actually have a removable brim for one of the brewer's chorizo. So when it does go to different events where it needs to come inside, it can actually fit through a door. Otherwise you'd have no way of being able to get the chorizo through the door.

[00:09:28] **Speaker 1** Yeah, because a lot of times you're getting designs that aren't started from you. Like someone else is giving you a logo or something, and telling you to turn this into a mascot. How difficult can that be?

[00:09:40] **Speaker 2** I mean, so the, more often than not, we're given something to start with, a school logo, a pre-existing mascot they wanna improve upon, or just an idea. And then what we have to do is we have to figure out how to create a functional character that somebody can wear. So if I look at Tony the Tiger on a cereal box, if I made, if we made his dimensions the way they're made in the cereal box he would have about four foot wide shoulders and an 18 inch waist. So no human can fit inside of that costume. So we have create it to human dimensions. While still ensuring that Tony the Tiger looks like Tony the tiger.

[00:10:13] **Speaker 1** And then, personally, what does this company mean to you?

[00:10:19] **Speaker 2** Um. For me, Olympus is all about the team members we have here. We do certain things, like we share 20% of our profits with our employees, we try to support our employees. We have loan programs for employees. Basically, we want to create a rewarding workplace for the team. We have 250-ish total employees, and for us, if we can support them, allow them to have a career or place where they work where they're proud of, where they like what they do, where they've compensated fairly and they have a chance to grow, to me, that's what's. Special about Olympus and that's what Olympus means to me.

[00:10:55] **Speaker 1** And then one thing that's come up over and over from everyone I've interviewed so far is just the team aspect of this place. How much a team, how important a team is, and how great a team it is, and designing needs to make.

[00:11:10] **Speaker 2** Yeah, I mean, a mascot can't be created by an individual. I mean it really requires a team, someone that knows how to fabricate a head, someone who knows how design a character, need talent and seamstresses that can do patterning. Now we have printers and cutters that are printing and cutting the fabrics, the custom fabrics we use to create the characters. So it really creates, I bet you each new mascot, if we're starting with a new character, maybe 15 different team members may have a part in helping bring that creation to life.

[00:11:39] **Speaker 1** Um, is there anything that I didn't ask or bring up that you want to make sure you get a call from?

[00:11:46] **Speaker 2** No, I don't think so. I mean, Brittany's amazing. I don't know if you've talked to her, but she's done this forever. And she's got some great stories. Brittany, Brittany helped create Ronald McDonald's latest look. I mean, she flew around the world for a while. Test fitting Ronald's in all sorts of different countries, she would actually take their measurements, chest size, inseam, outseam, waist size, then custom tailor Ronald's tuxedo and jumpsuit to each of the individual Ronald McDonald performers across the world, throughout the world. Pretty other fun, nothing comes to mind.

[00:12:25] **Speaker 1** Thank you so much sir. That was great. You bet.